

THE THRILLER

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LONG COMPLETE
STORY OF
'THE SHADOW'
By MAXWELL GRANT

GAS!

GAS!



Chapter I. BURRANK EXPLAINS.

I AM the only man who has any real knowledge of that strange, phantom personality known as the Shadow. There are one or two who are aware that he and Lamont Cranston, the alleged millionaire, are one and the same person, but even they are not much the wiser.

I know the whole pathetic story.

Lamont Cranston is a strange man, quiet and aloof, with a dignity and a certain sadness about him that, for all his stern and rather grim exterior, is strangely pathetic. That he is a man with a past is obvious. One cannot be in his presence five minutes without feeling the power that comes from vast experience, his knowledge of men and affairs is beyond question. He speaks of them with a quiet authority that carries conviction.

That he is well connected there is no doubt. He has an intimate knowledge of certain old families that only one connected with them could possibly obtain. Once, quite by accident, I came upon a letter, with a cross upon it, that surprised me. I could not fail to note the intimate terms—even terms of affection—with which he was addressed. But he keeps these things to himself, as is the character of the man.

One of the strangest things about him is the absolute devotion with which his friends and associates regard him. I have never in my life seen such affection. We would all, at his command, lay down our lives for him cheerfully. From his employees he demands unswerving obedience, but his rewards are truly magnificent. I believe he is one of the richest men in the country, although, like

most other things about him, one can never be certain.

In looks he is a very handsome man—thin face, aquiline nose, and deep-set, lustrous eyes of a quality hard to define. He is not a man one can lie to easily. I have seen men come in to see him, blustering with all the bounce and arrogance it is possible to conceive. I have seen those same men reduced to cringing, whining supplicants at a mere gesture from him.

He radiates power like no other man I have ever met. Women adore him, but he never seems to think twice of them. There has been only one woman in his life—his wife—long since dead. And although he never mentions it, I believe he is thankful to think that she did not live to see the things that happened to him in that mysterious part of his.

I believe I am the only man who knows his tragic history, for I knew him long before he took the name of Lamont Cranston—when his name—his true name—was John Harverson. He had a brilliant career. He was a great scholar, and, in his early days, practised as a solicitor. He married. His wife died, leaving him with an only son, whom he worshipped.

The loss of his wife unsettled him. He neglected his business, and left most of his affairs in the hands of his partner. Then came tragedy. In his absence from town, his partner, Simon Gregory, converted huge sums of money belonging to clients and used them for his own pur-

It was a strange sight that met Joe Carton's eyes. Four people round a card table—rigid, as in death, and yet, not dead!

poses. The climax came when Cranston—or Harverson, as he was then—found himself heavily involved. He was arrested and sent for trial.

During that terrible time he inherited a fortune—how, and where from, I do not know. With the money he recompensed those clients who had been victimised, but that act could not, in the eyes of the Law, atone for the offence with which he was to be charged.

He faced a judge and jury—a scene I shall never forget. He was found guilty, and the silence was intense as the judge pronounced the sentence. Even in those early days he had a personality that was outstanding. The judge himself was vastly affected by the tragic scene. But the Law is inexorable. John Harverson left the dock to spend many weary years behind grey prison walls.

Then came the beginnings of the Shadow. Somehow, during his sojourn in prison, word reached him—probably by criminals coming in from outside—that his former partner, Simon Gregory, had been embroiling further money, and had fled from justice. From the first John Harverson had known, although he had been unable to prove it, that he was paying the penalty of Gregory's crimes. But what mattered, even more than that, was the news that Gregory, not content with ruining him, had led Harverson's son into evil ways. The pair had vanished into the underworld.



From that moment Harverson was a changed man. Though he lost none of his former charm, he showed a determination that brooked no refusal in all he undertook. He had a purpose in life. Coolly, methodically, he set to work. First of all he made over his fortune to a mythical being named Lamont Cranston, and when that had been completed he escaped from prison—and vanished. Though the police have never ceased hunting for John Harverson, they have never so much as glimpsed him.

But after that prison break, Lamont Cranston appeared in the social world. And then, in the underworld, came the Shadow! Joe Carton, the Scotland Yard detective, knows that Lamont Cranston and the Shadow are one and the same person; but he does not guess that beneath those two distinct personalities lies another—that of John Harverson, escaped convict. If he ever finds that out his duty will be to arrest the Shadow! That must never happen—not until the Shadow's quest has succeeded—the search for Simon Gregory and his own son, Jim Harverson—to exact vengeance from the one and save the other! I believe that one day he will find them both, and God help Simon Gregory when that occasion arrives, for the Shadow will exact a terrible vengeance, and in the final retribution justice will not be tempered with mercy!

Meanwhile, there is one other thing which I alone know—that there is another man—the Shadow's double—who takes the part of Lamont Cranston when that individual is pursuing his quest elsewhere. Every little detail has been worked out. The organization of which I am proud to be a part has been perfected, with one aim in view. Whenever and whenever crime rears its ugly head, there is the Shadow, dealing ruthless justice to those whom the police cannot reach, and at the

same time carrying on his endless search for his son and that inhuman blackguard Simon Gregory.

RICHARD BURNAGE.

THE SLEEP.

It was nearly midnight when a taxi stopped in front of Poole Court, a block of luxury flats off the Marylebone Road, London. Two persons alighted from the car. One was a gentleman in evening clothes, the other a lady who wore a magnificent leopard-skin coat.

Clark Doring and his wife were frequent visitors to these flats. When they stepped into the lift, the lift-boy saluted and whisked them up to the fifth floor. He knew that these arrivals were coming to join the party in progress in the flat of Seth Tanning.

Arrived at the fifth floor, Doring and his wife turned right and walked to the end of the single corridor. They stopped at the last door. Doring unlocked. Sounds of hilarity were coming from within. Clinking glasses, voices of men and women were audible to the new arrivals in the corridor.

Doring rapped on the door. The sounds of merriment increased. The rap was not heard by those within. Doring waited a few moments, then pounded with increased vigour. The sound of the blows echoed along the corridor. Yet the laughter kept on.

Doring drew back to resume his pounding. He stopped with upraised fist. The hubbub from the flat had come to a sudden end.

"That did it," said Doring to his wife. "Seth must have heard those knocks. He'll be here in a minute to let us in."

The visitors waited patiently. Doring's minute passed. Complete silence reigned. Yet no one came to open the door. Doring glanced towards his wife in a puzzled fashion.

They were not dead, but asleep—victims of a master crook who tested the powers of The SHADOW to the uttermost

A POWERFUL, LONG COMPLETE STORY

By
MAXWELL GRANT

"Perhaps," she suggested, "they only thought they heard someone knocking. They may be waiting to hear you rap again."

Doring nodded in agreement. He decided to knock again, when an unexpected sound broke the silence that lay within. It was the ringing of a telephone-bell quite close at hand.

"The 'phone in the entrance hall," stated Doring. "Someone will answer that from the living-room. Then I shall knock again."

The jangle of the bell came with monotonous regularity. Like Doring's raps it went unanswered. It continued for another minute, then stopped. After that the bell sounded its mechanical call, ring after ring.

When the bell stopped for the second time both Doring and his wife were breathless. They still expected some response, yet none came. Even the telephone-bell had silenced this time. Two sense minutes passed. Doring pounded the door, then stopped and shrugged his shoulders.

"Something has happened, Mabel," he said solemnly. "Go to the lift and tell the boy about it. I can't understand this."

As Mrs. Doring walked toward the lift, it arrived at that floor. Mrs. Doring stopped the man who stepped out. Breathlessly, she explained the mysterious happening at Seth Tanning's flat.

"My name is Brook," said the new-come, speaking to Doring. "My flat is at the other end of the passage. We'd better call the police. You can use my 'phone.'"

"They couldn't possibly have gone out,"

said Mrs. Doring. "They might have been leaving the living-room."

"The flat is really only one big room—nothing but alcoves for dressing-room and kitchenette. There is no other exit but the door to this corridor," said Doring.

Brooks hurriedly conducted Doring to his flat. There Doring put through a call to the police. He held a short conversation while Brooks listened. Finally, Doring hung up and prepared to make another call.

"I spoke to an acting-inspector at the Yard," he explained. "Chap named Carton. He's coming up here."

Doring and Brooks lighted cigarettes and paced nervously back and forth in front of Tanning's door. At intervals Doring stopped to knock upon the panel. As before—no response.

The cluster of the lift gate announced the arrival of a tall, baggard man, who introduced himself as the manager of the flats. He explained that there was no master key to Tanning's flat. He rapped at the door; hearing no answer, he pondered the matter. While he was thus engaged, the lift arrived once more, and a bulky police sergeant stepped out followed by two constables.

These men were from the neighbouring police station. The sergeant listened to Doring's story, then looked at the closed door.

"I don't like to break in," he declared. "You heard no unusual noise? Nothing to indicate violence—"

"This silence is worse than violence," protested Doring. "I am sure, sergeant, that there are four people in the flat. All were laughing and talking. Then came silence."

Before the sergeant could reply the lift shot up to the floor and a swarthy, stocky man strode forth. This arrival needed no introduction. One glance showed that he was the man they all expected—Acting-Inspector Joe Carton.

It took Carton less than one minute to render a decision. With blunt questions he gained answers that added to the information Doring had given him over the phone. Carton turned to the police sergeant, then nodded his thumb towards the door of Tanning's flat.

"Smash it!" he ordered.

The bulky sergeant launched himself shoulder forward. The door quavered. A heavy constable joined the attack. As the door struck the door together, the hinges cracked. This time Carton shot forward between the two officers and went the door crashing down. Half sprawling, Carton staggered into the entrance hall of the flat. The others crowded in behind him.

It was on the threshold of the living-room that Joe Carton came to an awed stop. Though amazed, he stared stolidly despite the mumbles and gasps of those who had followed him.

The only motion in this living-room was that of the window curtains that waved slightly in the mild breeze from a half-opened window. But this meant nothing to Carton for the moment.

The light shone directly down upon the card-table in the centre of the room. There were four persons at that table—Seth Tanning, his wife, and two guests—the Wescotts. In all his experience as a member of the Force, Carton had never observed so startling a tableau.

The group still formed the participants of a convivial game of bridge. Four tricks had been taken by Seth Tanning. The little heaps of cards lay beneath his right hand; the man was staring at a fan of cards that he held in his left.

Across the table lay the spread-out cards of the dummy. Mrs. Tanning was resting back in her chair, holding a half-emptied glass in her right hand. Her gaze was toward her husband; her lips wore a slight smile.

The other players were looking intently at their friends. They were holding cards, but their expressions indicated that the play had ceased for a period of benter. They, too, were smiling. Had this group been active and in motion, there would have been no occasion for astonishment.

But every position was one of absolute rigidity. Each of the four was as stony as a statue. To Joe Carton the players looked like a group of figures carved by some crazy sculptor; or, even more, they resembled a bizarre exhibit in a waxwork museum.

No tension—no surprise—no expressions of excitement were reflected on those countenances. Yet something had chilled the entire group into their present state of being. Whatever the cause, the result

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had been simultaneous. It was this that made Carton sense that danger had passed.

Boldly the detective advanced to the card-table, while those who had followed him remained clustered at the entry. With furrowed brows Carton stared at the immobile faces of the group. He stepped back, more and then over. He heard an inquiry—in Clark Doring's voice—that came from the doorway. The question was a hoarse one.

"Are—are they dead?"

"No," Carton's response was oddly firm. "I do not think so. It can't be a state of paralysis—at least, I don't believe so. It looks like death—but it can't be death. They look like they were asleep, yet no one could sleep like that and—"

"Then what is it?" gasped Doring. "Not dead—not asleep—what has struck them?"

"A death sleep," replied Joe Carton.

A GENTLEMAN IN BLACK.

TENNIS players were seated around a card-table at the exclusive Cobalt Club discussing the game that had just ended. Suddenly deprived of a fourth

player, they were momentarily at a loss what to do.

The door of the card-room opened. The three men looked up to see a tall man dressed in evening clothes. They viewed a firm, steady-faced countenance that they all recognised. That hawkish visage was well known at the Cobalt Club. The newcomer was Lamont Cranston, the celebrated globe-trotter.

"Here's our fourth man!" exclaimed a player. "Come on, Cranston! Take Barth's place. He was having all the luck, but he was called away."

"Very unusual," remarked Cranston. "Barth usually stays to the end when he is winning."

"Not since he was appointed Commissioner at Scotland Yard in place of Ralph Weston," put in another man.

"He left here in a big hurry about fifteen minutes ago."

"A call from headquarters?" asked Cranston in a quiet tone.

"He didn't say. He just mentioned that he had removed word of an important case. Come on, Cranston! How about taking Barth's place?"

"Sorry," was the response. "I am just leaving for my Surrey home. I have special appointments for to-morrow morning."

Lamont Cranston strolled from the room. He crossed the quiet lounge and moved towards a telephone-box. A long, thin finger dialled a number. A short pause, then came a quiet voice across the wire.

"Burbank speaking."

"Report!"

The order came from the lips of Lamont Cranston; but it was not in the tone that other had heard the globe-trotter use. The voice of Lamont Cranston had become a strange, sinister whisper that Burbank recognised.

"Report from Burke," said Burbank. "He is following a hint he received at the 'Morning Sun' office. Carton is investigating a case in a flat on the fifth floor of Poole Court in the Marylebone Road. Police Commissioner summoned there. Burke promises further report later."

"Report received."

Lamont Cranston strolled from the telephone-box. He crossed the lounge and went out to the street where his car was waiting.

As the car started along the street Cranston instructed the driver to head for the Marylebone Road, to a car park close by Poole Court.

The big car rolled onward. Its single passenger was shrouded in the darkness. The spark of a cigarette was glowing; at intervals a soft laugh whispered from the rear seat. As the car neared its appointed parking place, long hands lifted a thick case from the floor. Puffs of dark cloth emerged. A cloak slid downward over shoulders. A slouch hat settled on a head. Black gloves were drawn on numb fingers.

When the car came to a stop the rear door opened. A blackened form glided free of the car. The door closed silently. The emerging figure blended with the darkness of an old house. Stanley, the chauffeur, remained aloof behind the wheel. He would wait here until he received new instructions.

Lamont Cranston had become the Shadow. From a leisurely, almost indolent club man he had transformed himself to a quick, alert being of semi-invisibility. Blending with the night, the Shadow had fared forth to learn of the events that had brought Joe Carton and Wainwright Barth to Poole Court.

To-night Joe Carton had encountered a most unusual mystery. Carton had sent for Barth. Clyde Burke, alert reporter of the "Morning Sun," had discovered that Carton had set out on an important case. It was Clyde's business to keep in touch with detective headquarters at the Yard. He was more conscientious in that work than any other reporter in London. For Clyde served more than the "Morning Sun." He was a secret agent of the Shadow. Immediately upon hearing of Carton's destination, Clyde had communicated with Barbant, hidden contact man who also served the Shadow. Thus, Lamont Cranston, too, was arriving at the scene of the mystery.

A blackened shape reached the pavement and drove into an alley beside Poole Court. Footsteps were clicking on cement. A policeman was peering the alley. A flashlight swept its beam along the wall. The rays passed by the tall form that stood motionless against the wall. The man missed sight of the cloaked figure of Lamont Cranston. His footsteps sounded down the alleyway.

Cranston moved. His hands pressed against the wall. A squelching sound—too soft for the policeman to hear—announced a vertical ascent. With suction cups attached to hands and feet, the Shadow was making upward progress, avoiding the windows where lights were showing.

One storey—two—he settled upon the fifth floor balcony just outside an opened window. He was outside the flat of Seth Tanning.

Straight across the alleyway was the roof of a warehouse, marked by a whitened parapet of stone. Above that was the dull glow of the West End sky. Crouched at the side of Tanning's window, the Shadow caught the sound of voices just within the room. Shifting slightly, Cranston gazed into the room. There he saw the figure of Walnwright Barth surveying the swarthy countenance of Joe Carton.

There were others in the room, a police sergeant and two constables, a gentleman and a lady whom Cranston was later to identify as Mr. and Mrs. Clark Doring; also another man who proved to be Handley Brooks, the occupant of another flat on this floor. Clyde Burke was not in sight.

"Tanning was sent here"—Carton was indicating a chair at the bridge-table—"and his wife was opposite. Wentcott over here—his wife in this chair. They were rigid, sir, stiff as statues. For a moment I thought they were dead. It's only one block over to the Tailorland Hospital. I sent for an ambulance and took them there in a hurry. No report from the doctors yet. They're sending for a specialist—Dr. Seton Lagwood—who's connected with the hospital. He specializes in paralysis, sleeping sickness, and kindred ailments."

"I should have liked to have seen these people," said Barth. "Still, you did right packing them to the hospital. Now that I am here I intend to sift this mystery. Let us proceed with those who first arrived."

The Commissioner turned to Clark Doring and his wife. They proved to be an excellent pair of witnesses. Despite the fact that they had been beyond a closed door, their description of events within the flat was both graphic and illuminating. It was Doring who told the story in accurate detail, while Mrs. Doring affirmed the truth of her husband's statements.

It was extremely puzzling. Barth began to pace back and forth across the room.

He paused to study the card-table, looking at his head as he did so.

"Everything is as you found it?" he asked sharply.

"Yes," replied Carton, "except for the victims. The window was open, sir."

Barth turned in the direction indicated. He could see the outline of the balcony rail against the sky that showed above the parapet of the warehouse.

"A balcony?" observed the Commissioner. "Did you inspect there, Carton?"

"Yes, sir. No sign of anybody. We made an inspection up from the bottom—using a man that the sergeant posted down there—and we didn't find a trace of any intruder."

"Jim-m-m!" Barth removed his spectacles and polished them, blinking owlishly as he did so. "Well, the evening has been quite warm for the season. An opened window would be expected. Have you searched the other flats on this floor?"

"Yes, sir," replied Carton. "There are four, altogether. Two are vacant. The manager had keys and let us in. Nothing



Sketched for the jar. The greenish liquid inside it was all that the crooks needed in their new enterprise.

wrong in any of them. Mr. Brooks lives in the other one besides this one we're in, and you have his statement there."

Barth raised his head impudently.

"We are dealing," he declared, "with a remarkable mystery that must be solved by science, not by the Law. We shall examine the contents of those glasses upon the table. Presumably some sort of poison will be found. A chemical analysis will answer that question. But I feel certain, in advance, that the liquids will show nothing extraordinary."

"I base this assumption upon the fact that the victims were overcome simultaneously. As you can observe, all were not drinking. There are only two glasses upon the table at present. Were this an ordinary case of foul play the persons would have succumbed one by one. It remains a strange case, and we must depend upon the medical authorities for their answer."

"The death sleep," Barth went on, as he dismissed the witnesses and prepared to leave. "An apt term, Carton. I believe that I shall go to the hospital and see what they think. Let me state again, however, that this is a morbidity or an epidemic of some sort, rather than a crime. There is no motive. This flat is isolated. No one

could have gained access or departed unobserved. The presence of persons in the corridors—people who heard sounds of life, their silence—is proof that crime has nothing to do with this mystery."

A few minutes later the apartment was deserted. The light had been turned off. Darkness was broken only by the dull glow of the sky-line beyond the warehouse. It was then that blackness obscured a portion of the window. Lamont Cranston, in the guise of the Shadow, moved into the flat.

Cranston had heard all the statements. The probing ray of a tiny electric torch was his means of checking on the details. Gloved fingers touched the surface of the card-table. They lifted; the cloth seemed to restrain them slightly.

The same effect resulted when he stooped to the floor and examined the rug just beyond the table. The bare floor, however, produced no such effect. It was only in the vicinity of the table that Cranston discovered this slight trace of stickiness.

Yet as he traced, Cranston discovered that the area formed a wide circle. Its centre was not the table itself, but a spot just to one side and beyond. The wall at the right of the room, looking in from the window, was a trifle sticky to a point three feet above the floor.

When he stood at the centre point of this odd circle, Cranston found himself facing directly towards the window. The card-table was a slight space away from that line. A soft laugh came from hidden lips. The cloaked form moved to the window, through the opening, and to the balcony.

The Shadow did not descend. Instead, he rose upon the rail, grasped the bottom of a balcony above, and swung up to the next floor. Outside the window of a darkened room, he stared across the alleyway. The roof of the warehouse was visible from here. Cranston saw a trap-door opening, that showed beneath the glare from the sky. Again the laugh of the Shadow sounded softly as he looked beyond the parapet. It was less than twenty feet from the warehouse to the block of flats.

Cranston descended. He resorted to the suction cups after he had passed the third floor balcony. He merged with the darkness of the paved space between the buildings. From then on his course was untraceable.

A click in a darkened room in a flat in Hancover Square. Bluish light shone upon a polished table. The Shadow was in his sanctum. A white hand began to move from the darkness; holding a pen, it inscribed words upon a sheet of paper. Written inscriptions faded as the blue ink dried. Such was the way with the special fluid that Cranston used when putting his deductions on paper.

The first jotted words were notes of the evidence that he had heard. Then came agreement that no one had entered the Tanning's flat. After that, Cranston marked down the results of his own findings.

"Outside factor." Cranston was thinking of the warehouse roof. He was visualizing a lurker there. The opened window was an easy target for the projection of some substance from the parapet. The Shadow knew that this alone could account for the simultaneous effect that had been produced upon the victims.

"Gaseous substance." This was a logical assumption. The sickness had indicated a wide range. A disintegrating bomb, loaded with poison gas could well have overpowered the people at the card-table. The interval between that occurrence and the arrival of the rescuers had given the atmosphere time to clear.

"Choice of victims." Nothing indicated any reason for an enemy to overpower the four persons who had been in the flat. It followed, therefore, that the deed had been of an experimental nature. This fitted with Cranston's deductions. No better spot could have been chosen for a test.

The attacker had evidently found it necessary to keep out of range of the gas. That meant the tossing of a bomb. Why had he pecked this flat? The answer was simple—to Cranston. Only rooms on the fifth floor of Poole Court were accessible to the bomb-tossers. Only two of these flats were tenanted, and of the two only this one had been occupied that evening. Handley Brooks had not returned until after midnight.

"The telephone calls." Cranston had correctly analysed the ringing that Dering had heard. The man on the roof had not waited to see the effects of his work. Instead, he had put through a phone call to Tanning's flat, probably from a public call-box. In this manner he had assured himself that the victims had succumbed.

The arrival of Brooks might have meant complicity. Brooks could have come to see if the scheme had worked. But the phone calls cleared him. They proved that a sump and less dangerous system had been used to check up on the results.

"The lockstep." With these words Cranston linked his thoughts to his first written statement. Why had Tanning and his guests been overpowered? Why had these four been chosen? The accessibility of the flat did not account entirely for it. There were many other places in London where victims could have been found.

Was it a random choice, or did it have a meaning? The fact that Poole Court was located close to a hospital had resulted in a prompt and definite removal of the victims. This was a point that impressed the Shadow. His soft laugh indicated that he intended to watch events at the Talleyrand Hospital.

"Motive. Crime." These were the final words. They disagreed with the verdict of the Commissioner. Cranston had found a motive where Barth had failed. For the Commissioner had been considering the present, while Cranston was looking to the future.

A tiny light appeared upon the wall beyond the table as Cranston reached for a pair of earphones. Burbank's voice came over the wire. The Shadow's whisper sounded. Through Burbank, the master who battled against crime was giving orders to his agents.

DEATH AT DUSK.

NOON in Camden Town. A sheet, stocky, ugly-faced man was seated by the window of a dingy room in a dingy house, crumpling over a newspaper. The man was Wolf Barian, notorious racketeer. Seated a short distance away was Spud Claxter, a well-dressed, crafty-faced fellow, whose shrewd eyes watched the expression on Wolf's face.

"Death sleep strikes four," chuckled Wolf Barian. "The reporters have got something to think about, Spud. This is just the sort of publicity we want. Medical men puzzled by the mysterious malady. They've got that specialist bloke—Dr.

Seaton Lagwood—on the job. That's just what I wanted to happen."

"And that's the part I don't like," muttered Spud. "That doctor bloke's a smart man, Wolf. Knows all about sleeping sickness and paralysis. The newspapers have been talking about his cures. I'd have worked it so that the stuff went to some other hospital, then some wash-out of a doctor would have had to work on 'em—not Lagwood."

"Listen, Spud!" Wolf's voice was a growl. "I'm running this—not you. I've been mighty careful with my plans. I brought you in because I needed a slick bloke to get the mobs for me when I need 'em, and you're the man for that job."

"And I fixed it for you, Wolf."

"You did," agreed Wolf. "First there was Skeet Wurrick. He scouted round these flats, and he put in some good work down at Valdan's. He made sure Valdan was out of town yesterday afternoon. That gave Zug Policy the chance to bust in and pinch the stuff we wanted. He got it to the hide-out like we planned. Meanwhile, Skeet picked that flat at Tanning's. It was made for the job. Near the Talleyrand Hospital. Skeet tells Zug to heave the bomb at midnight. Zug does it. He clears out while Skeet is watching the time and making those phone calls to see if the stuff worked. There ain't a hitch. It's too late for the morning papers. When Valdan gets back to town he won't know a thing until he picks up an afternoon edition, and the chances are he won't get a chance to read one."

"Because Zug will be waiting for him?"

"That's it," agreed Wolf. "Skeet lifted Valdan's papers. Zug got away with the stuff. Even if Valdan does read the afternoon editions of the evening papers he won't do nothing till he gets back to his shop. Then it's his good-bye to him."

Wolf laughed.

"It's all clear to you," he chuckled, "except the reason why I picked the Talleyrand Hospital. You can't see no reason to it. Well, I'm going to let you into the secret. If there's any doctor who might be able to tackle this stunt of ours—the death step, they call it—that man is Dr. Lagwood."

"That's what I've said all along."

"All right," Wolf tossed his cigarette stump into the hearth. "That's why I wanted these four people to go to the Talleyrand Hospital. This specious, Dr. Lagwood, will handle the cases himself. And he won't be likely to drag in another opinion, so that he'll be the only doctor who'll know anything at all. Then, if he makes trouble, we'll be able to handle him. Rub Lagwood out, and the other doctors will have to start at the beginning. By putting these cases right under Lagwood's nose, we make sure that he's the only doctor we'll have to watch."

Wolf reached for another cigarette, grinning with satisfaction. Spud's crafty eyes had opened in understanding.

"You've worked it pretty smart!" blurted Spud. "I get it now. That's why you've got Skeet hanging around the hospital. He's watching to see how Lagwood gets on."

"That's the idea," observed Wolf. "But we're leaving Lagwood alone as long as we can."

Wolf Barian remained smoking by the window after Spud had gone. The big shot showed his fanglike smile. His rackets had, at one time, let him down badly. He had retired into obscurity, waiting for his luck to turn. Then had come opportunity. He had an extensive racket net in the underworld. He had

learned of a new instrument that could be used in crime.

Last night had been the test. The death sleep had worked. The future seemed good. A bigger mob would be needed. Wolf could get all the men he wanted through Spud. Hidden, the big shot could launch a campaign of terror and profit that would be under constant control.

He felt confident of sure success. He could foresee nothing that might obstruct his path. Wolf Barian, however, had not as yet given thought to powers that lay beyond the Law. In all his careful planning, the big shot had studied the methods of the Law alone. He had not considered the power of the Shadow.

Late that same afternoon a taxi drove up in front of an old house in the neighbourhood of Regent's Park. A grey-haired man alighted carrying a brief-case. He paid the driver and ascended the steps of the old house.

A solemn-faced servant answered his ring, and reached for the brief-case, then stood aside while the old man entered.

"Anything unusual, Crowder?" asked the old man, speaking for the first time.

"Nothing, Mr. Valdan," replied the servant.

"Where is Benzig?" asked Valdan.

"In the laboratory downstairs, sir," replied Crowder.

The grey-haired man descended a flight of stairs. When he reached the bottom he arrived in a large room that was fitted with work benches and other stems of equipment. Large beakers, Bunsen burners, racks of test-tubes and shelves stocked with bottles announced that this was a chemical laboratory.

A wan-faced man was at one of the tables. He was pounding with a pestle, grinding powder in a mortar.

"Good-afternoon, Benzig!" greeted Valdan, in a thin tone. "What progress have you made during my absence?"

"Quite a bit, sir," replied Benzig. "I have completed the three compounds which you required. The quantity of the first seemed insufficient, so I am preparing more."

"Good! I suppose no one has called?"

"Only the delivery men, sir."

"What delivery men?"

"They brought three boxes, sir," explained Benzig. "Large cases, they were, with laboratory equipment. They were sure that the consignment was intended for you."

"Ordered no new equipment."

"That is what I told them, but they argued about it. Crowder knew nothing about it, so I sent the men away with the boxes."

Valdan looked perplexed. He stared across the laboratory towards a bolted door. "You have been careful to keep the outer door locked?"

"Yes," replied the assistant. "Of course. I opened it for the delivery men, but I bolted it as soon as they had gone. Then to-day, when they brought the guinea-pigs—"

"I ordered no guinea-pigs!"

"No?" Benzig looked surprised. "There were only a few left, sir. I thought, of course, that you must have ordered more."

"Where did you put them?"

"In your private laboratory, sir, where you always keep them."

Valdan stalked across the big room. He reached an inner door and opened it. He stepped into a small laboratory where a confused array of boxes was strewn on a table. Benzig followed his employer. He pointed to a crate of guinea-pigs which

lay in a corner at the right side of the room.

"Probably my last order has been duplicated in error," observed Valdan irritably. "What did you do with the few guinea-pigs I still had there?"

"I put them in this crate with the new ones," replied Benzig. "I let the men take the old box away with them."

Valdan nodded. He looked about the room while Benzig watched him. This small laboratory was a curious place. Its small amount of equipment was located in the centre, directly opposite the door, at the spot where the box-strewn table stood.

There was a door to a closet at the left side of the room. At the right, just beyond the box of guinea-pigs, the entire wall formed a huge filing cabinet that went up to the ceiling. The drawers were marked with cards that showed numbers. A step-ladder was handy, as a means of reaching the higher files.

Troxton Valdan registered annoyance as Benzig watched him.

"You mustn't let these cartage men prow around the place," he said complainingly.

"I am sure they touched nothing, sir."

"How can you be sure? You admitted that you went upstairs to speak to Crowder."

"That was yesterday, sir. But to-day I remained in the outer laboratory while the men brought the crate in here."

"Stupid of you! You should have come in here with them. Where is my afternoon newspaper?"

"It should be on the table, sir. Crowder invariably brings it here."

"It isn't here now. Find it! Ask Crowder where it is."

Valdan stared about suspiciously after Benzig had gone. He closed the door of the private laboratory and shot the bolt. He stooped and peered under the table. There an old piece of carpeting was draped over a wooden box. Valdan chuckled and began to rise. Then, to make sure, he stooped again and pulled away the old carpet.

A gasp came from his lips. Apparently this was not the box that Valdan had expected to find. He was puzzled by its shape and size, and its appearance. Seizing a hammer that lay upon the table, he prised away a board. He stared into the box. Its only contents were some short lengths of rusted iron pipe.

The chemist scrambled to his feet. He stared wildly at the door that he had bolted, then looked towards the filing cabinets at the end of the room. Hurrying in that direction, Valdan seized the little ladder and mounted to the highest step. With quivering hands he pulled open a drawer that bore the numbers 26-115. Large folders filled the drawer. Valdan rummaged through them, muttering numbers half-aloud. His voice became a hoarse, anxious whisper.

"One hundred and nine—one hundred and ten—one hundred and eleven—"

The chemist stopped short. The number that he had just named was missing. He gripped an envelope that bore the number 116.

The next one in the drawer was 112. "Benzig!" The chemist blurted the name in a wild call for his assistant.

"Benzig!" Valdan had forgotten that he had bolted the door. A slight sound behind made him think that his assistant had returned. Scrambling downward from the ladder, Valdan began to turn. A click from the door; the little laboratory, windowless, was plunged in darkness. A form sprang

DANGEROUS DAME

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forward. Valdan grappled with an unseen assailant.

The struggle was short-lived. Valdan toppled to the floor. Hands gripped his head and pounded it fiercely upon the stone floor. Pierce panting sounded in the darkness. Then the vicious assailant held his breath and listened. No further sound came from Troxton Valdan.

The killer arose. Though he tipped his footfalls clicked strangely in that darkened room. Then came the grating of the bolt as he drew it back. Eyes peered into the deserted outer laboratory. The killer moved out and closed the door behind him.

Deep stillness reigned in the inner room. Minutes passed, then the door opened and an astonished exclamation came in the voice of Benzig. The assistant seemed surprised to find the room in darkness.

"I—I thought Mr. Valdan is in here!" Benzig was speaking to Crowder, who had come with him. "But—but the light is out—"

Crowder's hand pressed the switch. Then came blurted exclamations from both servant and assistant. Standing just inside the doorway, they stared at the prone form of their employer.

"Dead!" whispered Crowder tensely. "He's been murdered!"

TWO GUINEA-PIGS.

STRANGELY enough, Mr. Barth, the Commissioner of Police, was at the Cobalt Club when the news of the murder of Troxton Valdan reached him, and it was Lambert Cranston who offered to take him to the scene in his car—an offer that was eagerly accepted. On the way Barth talked of the circumstances.



Cranston, in the guise of the Shadow, rode with Spad Claxter, but the crook did not know it.

"I was summoned last night," he explained, "to view the scene of an extraordinary mystery. Of course, you have read about it in the papers, Cranston. I refer to the strange death sleep that overpowered four victims."

"I glanced at the headlines," replied Cranston, "but I did not read the details. Are the victims recovered?"

"Their condition had not changed at three o'clock this afternoon. I received a report from the medical man in charge—Dr. Seton Lagwood."

"I have heard of him. A specialist in such maladies as sleeping sickness."

"The affair," explained Barth, "took place in a block of flats not far from the Talleyrand Hospital. Hence the victims were taken there for treatment. Lagwood is connected with that hospital."

"Quite a coincidence," responded Cranston. "What of these men? Has anything to do with the death sleep?"

"I should hardly think so. It concerns the death of a chemist, Troxton Valdan. It appears that he was found dead in his laboratory, and the evidence balances between foul play and accidental death."

When the car pulled up in front of Valdan's house a policeman appeared and saluted the Commissioner. The man led the way up the steps and down the inner staircase into the large laboratory. Here Barth and Cranston were met by Joe Cartson, who led them into the smaller room. They viewed Valdan's body. Barth looked toward the police surgeon, who had just completed an examination.

"Death was instantaneous," he announced. "Caused by a fracture at the back of the skull. His head must have received a terrific blow."

"A fall from the ladder would have been sufficient."

"Yes. The man appears to be a healthy specimen, but he is certainly getting on in years. Vertigo would not be surprising. The effort of climbing the ladder could have caused it."

"Then the evidence points to accidental death."

"Just a moment, sir," remarked Cartson. "There is one point about this case that I didn't have a chance to explain. This room is not exactly as it was just after Troxton Valdan's death."

"Ah!" Barth's countenance changed suddenly. "You mean that you have found some piece of evidence? Or that something has been removed?"

"Neither," replied Cartson. "The room is exactly as I found it. But it is not as it was when these men—Cartson indicated Benzig and Crowder—"when these employees of Valdan's entered. They turned on the light!"

Wainwright Barth stood staring. His bald head glistened, while his eyes blinked through the pince-net spectacles.

"Dealing with the obvious first, sir," Cartson stated, "we can agree that Valdan was on the ladder looking through the file. But it is not logical to suppose that he was doing it without any light."

"You should have told me this before!" snapped Barth. "This places an entirely different aspect on the case. What about those delivery men?"

"Yesterday," stated the detective, referring to his notes, "several men arrived with three boxes that they said contained laboratory equipment. This is according to Benzig's testimony. He unbolted the outer door and let them in. Valdan had gone away; he had left no word about the new equipment. So Benzig went upstairs and asked Crowder if he knew anything about it. The servant knew nothing.

Benzig returned and sent the men away with the boxes."

"I see. And they returned to-day?"

"Yes. With a crate of guinea-pigs. Benzig let them put the crate over there. This is it—here by the body. Valdaun used those guinea-pigs for some purpose. Had them in the laboratory. Benzig thought the consignment was all right—so he says."

Carton expected another question from the Commissioner. It did not come. With one of his abrupt changes of tactics, Barth began to pace across the room.

"Here's a box with two guinea-pigs in it," declared the detective. "But they're dead ones."

"Humph!" grunted Barth, not interested.

"And this box drawn out from under the table," added Carton. "Nothing in it but a lot of lead piping. Folders in the drawer of the filing cabinet. Number one hundred and eleven is missing."

"Ah!" exclaimed Barth. "Did you question Benzig about that?"

"Yes. He said that Valdaun got him to arrange the folders in numerical order. That was about a month ago. Valdaun threw a lot of them away as they were of no use, and he left the gaps blank."

"Then, we can assume that number one hundred and eleven was destroyed with the others. That is, unless we can positively assure ourselves that something had been taken from this room. Did you question Benzig about that?"

Lamont Cranston had strolled over to the table. He lifted the cover of the box that contained the two guinea-pigs. Barth saw him and smiled indulgently. The Commissioner was concerned with more important matters than dead guinea-pigs. Carton was saying:

"Benzig couldn't see that anything was missing. He made a good search, too."

"We must question him again," decided Barth. "If we could prove that something is missing from this little laboratory—something that we know should be here—"

"You have already been told that something is missing," interposed Cranston quietly, as he leaned above the box that held the two guinea-pigs.

"You mean—"

"The copy of the afternoon newspaper Valdaun wanted. Benzig thought Crowder had brought it down as usual. He went to ask Crowder who, in his statement, said that he had brought it down. He came down with Benzig to see about it, and they found Valdaun dead. The newspaper is not here."

"This is not a time for trifles, Cranston," rebuked Barth. "Why should a murder be committed over a newspaper?"

"The answer is quite simple," responded Cranston. "It is possible that the phrase, 'death sleep,' might have caught the eye of Troxton Valdaun. That seeing it, the chemist might have instantly placed himself on guard, or lodged information with you."

"Absurd!" interjected Barth. "Your imagination is running away with you, Cranston. There is no connection between that episode at the Tanning's flat and this death of Troxton Valdaun."

"No connection?" Cranston's lips formed a thin smile. "I must disagree with you, Commissioner. I have just been examining the evidence that proves the very connection of which I have spoken."

"Where is it?" barked Barth in excitement.

"Here," replied Cranston, tapping the cardboard box.

"The dead guinea-pigs?" cried Barth.

"What is this, Cranston—a box? Two guinea-pigs—dead ones—have nothing to do with murder."

"The two guinea-pigs," remarked the millionaire, "are not dead. On the contrary—the tone was unchanged, but the words came more slowly—on the contrary, those guinea-pigs are paralysed—"

As Cranston's voice ceased, Joe Carton came bobbing up from the cardboard box. His usually stolid face betrayed sudden excitement.

"He's right, sir!" exclaimed Joe. "The guinea-pigs are paralysed, like those people were last night. It's the death sleep again!"

Some little while later, Lamont Cranston's car rolled away from the home of Troxton Valdaun. After a southward journey it turned into Hanover Square. Stanley, the chauffeur, parked at his master's bidding. A blackened form emerged silently from the rear.

The light clicked in the Shadow's secret sanctum. Hands appeared beneath the flung-down, soft-lavender curtains, and fingers began to inscribe written thoughts that faded in mysterious fashion. Cranston was considering facts that he had noted at Troxton Valdaun's.

"Valdaun. Guinea-pigs." Why had Valdaun kept guinea-pigs in his little laboratory? Obviously for experimental purposes. This indicated that Valdaun himself had applied the paralytic treatment to the two guinea-pigs in the cardboard box. The chemist was not the victim of the death sleep. The living guinea-pigs proved that fact. Instead, Valdaun, with his secret experiments was logically the discoverer of the gas that produced that rigid slumber.

"Delivery men." Again Cranston laughed softly. He could see the purpose of those visitors. Yesterday men had come with boxes. Benzig had gone upstairs while they were in the laboratory. The men had taken the boxes away. But they had left one of the three and taken another in its place. They had stolen the complete supply of gas containers that Troxton Valdaun had concealed beneath the table in his little laboratory.

"The newspaper." Cranston combined this new thought with an unfinished one—the matter of the second appearance of the delivery men. The first visit had been to accomplish theft. The second to prevent Valdaun discovering the fact. Last night Valdaun's gas had been tested at the Tanning's flat. To-day Valdaun was due to return.

There was only one course open to the criminals. Valdaun had to be silenced—for ever. The second delivery—the crate of guinea-pigs—had been a blind to enable the killer to conceal himself in the closet of the inner laboratory, there to await the return of Troxton Valdaun.

Someone—either the killer or a member of the gang—had seen the newspaper upon Valdaun's table. That newspaper had been removed. This was proof that someone in the gang knew the contents of the box that had been stolen on the previous day. That same man might have been the one who had thrown the gas bomb into Seth Tanning's flat.

"The murderer." Cranston could see the scheming of a master brain; but he knew that the actual murder of Troxton Valdaun had been left to an underling. The big shot was out of sight, trusting to crooks of the gangster type to do his bidding.

The bluish light clicked out. Cranston had gone far in his analysis of crime. He

knew that some crafty super-fend had learned of Troxton Valdaun's experiments; that this schemer had called in the aid of the underworld to gain the weapon he wanted. With this conviction Lamont Cranston mapped his campaign. As yet the odds lay with those who defied the Law. But the shadow, unseen, unsuspected, was swinging the balance in his favour.

PLANE FOR CRIME.

"Loose business!"

Wolf Barian growled this assertion as he glowered at Spud Claxter.

"The cops ain't got nothing on us. Wolf," Spud protested. "Zug got away with it. He croaked Valdaun, didn't he?"

"He had," retorted Wolf. "But it's a wonder everybody else don't know it as well as us. It was a bad slip up the way Zug left it—lights out, bolts loose, two doped guinea-pigs. They've connected Valdaun's death with those people we knocked out the night before. But they're off the track of the gas. That was on account of the live guinea-pigs. Did you read the statement by Dr. Lagwood?"

"I tried to," Spud chuckled. "The words were pretty knotty, though. Still, he thought he was pretty smart when he said the gas would have doped all the guinea-pigs instead of just two."

"It worked out all right for us," asserted Wolf. "The cops are looking to Lagwood to be the expert on this gas, so they won't bother about any more specialists."

"Only one doctor for us to watch," added Spud. "But, just the same, I can't see where Lagwood is going to help our racket. Skeet slipped me the word that he's been working hard on those stiffs we put under at Poole Court."

"He said that, did he?" retorted Wolf. "I was just going to ask you about Skeet. He's got more brains than Zug. What's Skeet got to say?"

"He got that job at the hospital. Pushing wheel-chairs in and out of a store-room. Running errands. Sort of general handy-man. Lagwood sent him down to a chemist's shop close by to bring back some prescriptions. Here's a list of the stuff."

Wolf received the sheet of paper. Instead of being listed as prescriptions in the usual pharmaceutical fashion, the items bore special names that were apparently of Dr. Lagwood's devising. These were odd abbreviations, and each bore a number.

"That's funny!" observed Wolf. "Wonder why he made up the list like this?"

"He explained it to Skeet," stated Spud. "Told him that if Hoffer—that's the chemist—wasn't in the shop, to give it to anybody there. Said he always marked his preparations so that even a dumb scientist could understand and know where to find them."

Wolf began to eye the list. He noted that a line had been drawn through one item. He read the abbreviation, "Neut."

"No. 6." He pointed it out to Spud.

"Skeet have anything to say about this?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Spud. "Lagwood crossed it off. Told Skeet to tell Hoffer that he wouldn't be wanting any more of the stuff for a while. Wanted Hoffer to store the rest somewhere handy."

"What did Hoffer do about it?"

"Dug under the counter and pulled out a gallon jar of some green stuff. When Skeet went out, Hoffer was taking it down into the cellar."

To Spud the matter was of little consequence. Wolf, however, had another impression.

"A couple of nit-wits, you and Skeet," affirmed the big shot. "What time does Skeet get off duty at the hospital?"

"Eight o'clock to-night," answered Spud. "Why? Got something for him to do?"

"You bet I have! He gets the sack as soon as he can. Get hold of him and tell him to do something so they'll kick him out to-day. I don't care what it is."

"But then he won't be watching Lagwood!"

"I don't want him to watch Lagwood!" Wolf growled savagely. "He's done enough of that. Lagwood says in the paper he has abandoned the theory of a gas causing the death sleep. Says that he had been working on a vapour treatment, using a neutraliser that he had worked out after making blood tests."

"What's a neutraliser?"

"It's stuff that would kill the gas fumes if you had it ready. They used neutralisers in gas-masks during the war. A gas-mask isn't just a bag that you put over your head. It's got a nozzle that you put some chemical stuff in, but you've got to have the right stuff."

"And you've got a lot of gas-masks over in the hide-out?"

"Just waiting for the right stuff to go in them. Listen! Here's Skeet's job. He's got to bust into that chemist's, see? It's a one man job. Nobody'll get him if he finds a cellar window. Tell him to find that gallon jar with the green stuff. Bring it to the hide-out. Then we're all set. That is, if the stuff works."

"You mean that we'll be able to follow in after we have the gas bombs that we patched from old Valdan?"

"You've guessed it. But we're not going to work too fast. I've got two jobs in mind with plenty of swag in 'em if they're worked right. And after that—well—"

Wolf chuckled as he reached for a cigarette—"it's anything up to the Man!"

Spud Xavier set staring from his chair. His shrewd brain was visualising possibilities that the big shot had suggested. Wolf Barian was looting with his yellowish teeth displayed to their full. Then the big shot's countenance changed. Wolf snarled an order.

"Scrani!" he said to Spud. "Get hold of Skeet and tip him the wink. Then get going and pick a mob. I want some more men."

Spud lost no time.

Shortly before eight o'clock that evening, Rupert Sayre, a young doctor, made his exit from the Talleyrand Hospital. He walked along the street to an obscure spot, and entered the driver's side of a parked car. A low voice spoke from the darkness.

"Did you learn anything?"

"Yes," replied Sayre. "I don't know how important it is, Vincent, but it may be what you are looking for. I had a long talk with Rawson. He spent an hour showing me round the place."

"You saw the death sleep patients?"

"Yes; but I did not meet Dr. Lagwood. But I remembered your request—to catch the details of any unusual incident. I learned of one that has reference to a new attendant."

A fellow named Charles Dowther—at least, that was the name he gave himself—was given a job only a few days ago, moving wheel-chairs and running errands. He worked on the floor where Dr. Lagwood has his consulting-room and his laboratory. I believe that this man must have been in a position to

observe what was going on there. Well, Dowther held his job all right until this afternoon."

"What happened then?"

"He let a wheel-chair get away from him coming down a flight of stairs. He had no right with it there. He should have taken it down in the lift. Since the matter appeared to be an accident he was severely reprimanded. Apparently he thought he would be dismissed, for he returned late after going out to supper. He arrived only twenty minutes ago, and he was creating a great scene. That was how Rawson happened to tell me all about him."

"What was the matter with him?"

"Drunk! He came in through the attendant's entrance, and began to argue with everyone in sight. 'Sack me, will you? Who's got to sack me? I'll resign! That's how he kept on. So they were sucking him when I left.'"

"It must have been funny."

"It was, Vincent. Particularly as the man was faking being drunk."

"You are sure?"



Cranston was at bay. He would have chosen other methods, but the crooks left him no choice.

"Positive," returned Sayre. "But I was the only person who noticed that, Vincent, that man wanted to be sacked. The doctor paused to catch his companion's arm. 'Look! Under that lamp! Here comes the man now.'"

A hunched figure was staggering from the side of the hospital. In one hand the man held several pound notes, in the other he waved his cap. He paused to turn back towards the entrance, where attendants were watching his departure. Then, with a final gesture of contempt, the man staggered to the street.

He passed the parked car, muttering to himself and hunching in his suit. He stopped suddenly, turned about and looked back. Satisfied that no one was still watching him, he steadied and laughed. He moved off into the darkness, shuffling out of sight.

"I told you that he was acting, Vincent."

"Thanks!" said Vincent. "I'm following him."

Sayre's companion opened the door and stepped to the pavement. Sayre waited until he had passed from view, then started the car and drove off. To Dr. Rupert Sayre this episode had been both unusual and unimportant. He had come to the Talleyrand Hospital in response to a telephone message from a friend named

Lamont Cranston. Some time before the young doctor had been in danger of death, and he owed his life to a mysterious, black-painted being. It had been suggested that if ever he wished to show his gratitude to obey any requests from Lamont Cranston without questions. Thus, Sayre was really an agent of the Shadow. Acting on instructions, he had picked up Harry Vincent, another of the Shadow's agents, at the Metropole Hotel, and brought him along.

As Harry moved easily but rapidly along the streets not far from the hospital, he realised that he was trailing a product of the underworld. This was perfectly correct for Harry was in pursuit of none other than Skeet Wurrick. This unfeeling of crime had used the name of Dowther when he had obtained the job at the hospital.

Skeet was now bound for the little chemist's shop that bore the name of Hoffer's Pharmacy. He made a detour that brought him to the entrance of a

blind alley. He dived down it out of sight. Harry Vincent, coming from the corner that Skeet had just turned, was deceived by the ruse. The Shadow's agent kept on along the road.

Skeet had not suspected that he was being followed. At the end of the alley he found a basement window at the back of the chemist's shop. He prised it loose, slid his wiry body into the opening, and found himself in Hoffer's cellar. Skeet inspected with an electric torch. He found the door of a cupboard, opened it, and spotted the gallon bottle on a shelf. He recognised the greenish liquid, and examined the label. Switching off his torch, he grabbed the prize that he sought, and made his way back to the window. Three minutes later he sneaked from the blind alley and hastened across the street.

It was then that Harry Vincent saw him. The Shadow's agent was returning from the opposite direction. He caught sight of Skeet's sinking form passing beneath an isolated street lamp. He saw the bottle that the fellow was carrying. Then Skeet reached the corner.

Harry went after him, swiftly but with caution. He reached the corner and glimpsed Skeet nearly a block away, just

To My Readers

THERE are all sorts of weapons when gangs go to war, from brickbats to stutter-guns, but a woman always has one more weapon than a man. Call it sex-appeal—"yumf"—anything you like—but it's there; and Val Emery, the only girl to run a private detective agency in London, used it cleverly, ruthlessly, in her battle with Nick Scarlatti for the stolen Stranison emeralds.

But there was another girl—a member of Scarlatti's mob—known as Tiger Lily, and against her Val's weapon was turned into a boomerang that came back unexpectedly and nearly ended her brilliant career on the spot.

There was the crook from the States, too, who answered to the name of Icy Bill—only Val found he wasn't nearly so cold as his name implied when the sex appeal got working properly. If it hadn't been for Bill things would have panned out differently. Moreover, Scotland Yard, often despised but always efficient, came into the final battle and turned the trick. All the same, Val brought off a smart piece of

work, and the telling of it, by George Dillnot, makes next week's long, complete story a real winner. You must read "DANGEROUS DAME," in next week's THRILLER Library. It will thrill you. It is clever, ingenious, and proves that George Dillnot probably knows more of the



(On sale, Friday, June 3rd.)

inner workings of the Yard than any other writer.

IN the same issue I am pleased to place before you another grand THRILLER scoop—the opening chapters of **HUGH CLEVELEY'S** new story, "THE GANG-SMASHER AGAIN!" You heard the Gang-Smasher on the wireless. His daring and amazing adventures have been thrilling the nation for weeks past. The broadcast has come to an end, but the exploits of the Gang-Smasher have not ended for you. Make sure of next week's THRILLER Library and take up the tale where the B.B.C. left off! Read how the Gang-Smasher and Tortoni come to grips again. It's a scoop!

Order your copy in advance. Next week's THRILLER Library is a double-feature number, and there is bound to be an increased demand. Don't you be one of the disappointed ones.

The Editor

Letters to the Editor should be addressed to: "The Thriller" Office, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

GAS!

(Continued from previous page.)

about to turn another corner. Harry hurried forward. He was too late. He reached the corner just in time to see a car shoot away from half-way down the next street.

The Shadow's agent was chagrined at his failure. There was only one course left to him. That was a report to Burbank. Harry walked along until he found a call-box. He got through to Burbank, made his report, and received orders to return to the Metropole Hotel.

While Harry Vincent was encountering this failure, another agent of the Shadow was at work within the confines of the underworld. Seated at a table in the Black Ship, a sturdy chap with a rugged face was listening to the bossful talk of a husky mobster.

This listener was Cliff Marland, the Shadow's agent in the underworld. Cliff had gained a reputation amongst crooks, and he commanded their respect. The fellow opposite him—Luke Gooney—was the type of man Cliff could make talk freely.

"I'm on to something good, Cliff," asserted Luke. "That's why I'm tellin' you about it. Just had some dough shipped me in advance. That means there's more to come."

"It generally does," observed Cliff. "Sometimes there's a catch in it." "Not in this," retorted Luke. "I'll tell you why. The bloke that shipped me the dough"—he leaned across the table and reduced his voice to a whisper—"was Spud Claxter."

"Thought he was out of town," responded Cliff. "What's the game?" Luke grinned.

"Might as well spill it," he decided. "Spud's givin' me a hundred quid. Twenty quid in advance—that's the way I just showed you. Well, Spud picked me because I know how to use a gun. No argument about the dough. He coughed up what I asked for. What I'm drivin' at is this. If Spud wanted me, he'll want you. You'll get a bad from Spud. Hold out for a couple of hundred. He'll pay it. Then"—Luke's tone was wary—"you and me make a split."

"On the two hundred?" "Half of it," responded Luke, evading Cliff warily. "One hundred is yours. The other hundred goes two ways. You an' me, fifty-fifty. Worth it, ain't it, for the tip?"

"On the first job," said Cliff. "Not any other jobs."

"All right," agreed Luke reluctantly, seeing he could get no further. "Are you in?"

"Yes," replied Cliff, "if you tell Spud that I won't work for less than two hundred."

"I'll fix that. I'm goin' out with Spud's lot to-morrow. The next night I'll go over details with you. Here—at this table."

Cliff nodded. He made a warning gesture, then rose and strolled from the Black Ship. Outside, he sauntered along until he reached a public call-box, where he put through a phone call to Burbank. The Shadow would approve Cliff's actions.

OUT OF THE DARK.

EARLY the next evening Lamont Cranston sauntered from the entrance of the Cobalt Club. The millionaire purchased a newspaper. He entered his

car, gave an order to the chauffeur, then turned on the light and began to peruse the day's news.

The big feature was the recovery of the four patients in the Talleyrand Hospital. Dr. Seton Lawrence had gained an unprecedented triumph. He had varied his treatments during the preceding evening, and results had followed.

Lamont Cranston turned off the light as the car neared the Aldgate Pump. Black cloth came tumbling from a suitcase on the back seat. When Stanley pulled up beside the kerb in a secluded street, Cranston's voice gave new instructions. Then a rear door opened silently, a phantom shape emerged and glided into the darkness. Stanley was holding a watch. Two minutes passed. The chauffeur started the car and headed back towards the Cobalt Club.

Narrow alleys, grimy street lamps, fronts of buildings, where streaks of light issued through cracked window blinds—such were the surroundings that Cranston had chosen. Skulking forms were moving through the gloom. He had reached the heart of the underworld, that district where every person was his enemy. Yet he remained unseen in the midst of this hostile territory, moving stealthily toward a desired destination.

The Black Ship. Cranston paused in darkness opposite the notorious hosiery. His keen eyes, closed to narrow slits, kept watch on those who came and went. At last a bulky figure appeared in the doorway. Cranston recognised Luke Gooney.

Luke was cautious. He looked over his shoulder as he stalked along the street. But he did not see the black-garbed form that followed him. Luke reached the back of an old garage. The place was supposedly empty; it's sliding doors had long

since been ripped away and used as firewood. But the garage was not empty to-night. Luke seemed to know that fact, for he entered through a blackened door.

Luke blundered into the back of a touring car. A gruff voice challenged him. Luke made reply, and was recognized. A group of men clustered close together. Silently Cranston approached and stood within five feet of them.

"We're goin' out in two cars," announced one man. "Louie's drivin' the first. Gabby follows with the second. Four in each car. Louie's goin' to pick up Spud. We follow where he leads. No lights till we get out of this place. Get that?"

Grunts of understanding. The crooks entered the cars. Louie's car coasted down an incline of planks, the engine did not start until the car had reached the street. Gabby's car followed with its load of crooks. As motors roared in the street, lights came on. The two cars fled through narrow thoroughfares with cautious crooks stooped deep in the seats. The back of Louie's car was revealed by Gabby's headlights. But the rear of the second car was visible to none.

Hence not one of the armed mob knew that a stranger was accompanying them. Cranston's elated form was resting upon the rear bumper of the second car, huddled motionless over the spare tyre, unrevealed by the tiny glare of the rear light. He had chosen this perch with the assurance that the gangsters would keep away from thoroughfares where traffic was heavy. This proved correct.

When the cars finally came to a stop they were miles from London, in a narrow lane beside a hedge that bordered someone's estate. It was here that the crooks alighted to hear their leader's orders.

"Through the hedge," ordered Spud, who had been picked up back in town. "We're goin' to cover the bunch that's goin' in. Let 'em get away, an' don't use your guns unless you have to."

The toughs responded their understanding. They scrambled through the hedge and gained positions as Spud had ordered. Louie and Gabby remained in the touring cars, watchful, while Spud went with the mob. It was shortly afterwards that Cranston followed.

Unseen, unheard by either Louie or Gabby, Cranston glided through the hedge. He paused in a darkened spot to view the bulk of a huge square stone house that occupied the tract of ground inside the hedge. Dim lights from lower windows indicated halls and passages. Upstairs, blocks of light showed an occupied room. That spot, Cranston knew, must be the point of attack. Moving forward, slipping past the forming cordon of gangsters, the Shadow reached the side of the looming house.

He knew that he must reach that lighted room. He decided that the best mode of entry would be from the back of the house. Moving along the wall, he reached a secluded spot where a darkened window showed alone. Clinging vines of ivy offered a rapid means of ascent.

Cranston knew Spud Claxter's scheme of action. Chosen men were due to enter this house and perform some crime. Meanwhile, the mob that included Luke Gomey were posted as an emergency crew. They would cover the escape of the actual raiders. Cranston's plan was to enter, to surprise the raiders on their arrival. Working from the inside, he could throw terror into the ranks of the gangsters. After driving the raiders back he could resist any invasion by the outer cordon.

Cranston had started up the wall. He

paused suddenly. From within the house he caught the dull sound of a slamming door, the scuffle of feet upon the stairs. The Shadow recognized the noise. It meant that men were going down—not coming up.

Instantly, Cranston dropped from the wall. Instinctively, he swung along the ground, heading for the far side of the house. As he gained the corner, he heard a crash near the front of the building. Swinging doors were hurled open from a wide porch. Out from the house leaped four ruffians, masked and carrying boxes.

These were the raiders. They had come ahead of the cordon. There had been some mistake in timing. Spud Claxter and his mob had arrived after the crime, not before. Cranston's idea of defence was baffled.

An automatic barked. The last of the four raiders staggered but dodged on beyond the front wall. Cranston's quick shot had wounded the raider, but had not dropped him. Thus it was due to cause new complications. The flash of the automatic had been seen by two of Spud's cordon; the report of the gun had been heard by all.

As Lambert Cranston sprang forward to pursue the raiders who had rounded the front of the house, revolvers barked from many points. Powerful torches glimmered toward the stone walls of the house. Shouts arose as gangsters sprang inward across the lawn. Half a score of toughs were ready to trap the enemy who had fled that surprise shot. They were everywhere, acting with skilful promptness. Those who had seen the flare of Cranston's first shot were shouting the news to their comrades. Bullets were flattening against the side wall.

Ducking as he passed the dull light from the main door, Cranston gained the front corner of the house. Here an open

porch extended, with a stone parapet. It was the bulwark he needed. With a quick spring he gained the top of the wall. There his temporary flight changed to challenge.

Upon the parapet Cranston paused. At that spot he delivered a mocking laugh. The shout rose high above the scattered gunfire of the sniping cordon. The crooks paused as they heard the glib tones. They knew that laugh—the mirth of the Shadow!

Its tones did more than spur the escaping raiders to swifter flight. It brought Spud Claxter's crew out toward the front of the house. Their torches spun towards the Shadow.

"Hold it!" came Spud's cry. "Hold it till you spot him! It's the Shadow—"

At that instant a swinging torch found the corner of the front porch parapet. There, half-crouched, was the Shadow. A laugh came from his hidden lips as wild revolvers barked. Then the Shadow dropped suddenly behind the parapet, and upon that instant his weird mirth lost its crescendo. Silence followed the laugh.

Gangsters came piling forward toward the corner of the porch. Their object was to scale the wall, to pounce upon their common enemy. Suddenly their shouts of triumph changed to startled cries. From the corner of the parapet came tongues of flame, accompanied by the echoed roar of automatics. Dropping torches marked the spots where cowering crooks cowered.

They had learned Cranston's strategy too late. His fall had been with the shots, not after them. The breaking of his laugh had been the final touch. The end of the strident mirth had given the crooks the impression that they had hit him.

All had chosen the shortest route to the front porch parapet. They had scoured in from the open. Then Cranston had changed his method. He had lured the enemy into a frontal attack. All but a



When Mugsy invited Cliff Marsland to join Wolf Barlan's gang, how was he to know he talked with one of the Shadow's men?



Skeet led the way down into the secret hide-out. Cliff Marsland was there. He had come prepared, armed with the Shadow's instructions.

few late arrivals were in the spot he wanted them. His position had become a stronghold.

Crooks dropped to the ground. Throwing away their betraying torches, they opened vicious fire. Bullets chipped chunks of stone from the walls that formed Cranston's bulwark. Shifting, gaining new vantage points, he returned the fire, choosing the spots where revolver flashes showed.

Mobsters groaned. Their fire lessened. Half of the mob were silent. The others faltered. One of the men leaped to his feet and fled. Others copied his example. The Shadow's laugh rose high as his head and shoulders came up from the wall. His automatics thundered as they sent slugs after the scattering crooks.

Yet the Shadow sensed other danger. He had ended the frontal attack. Some of the raiders lay motionless; others were crawling toward the cover. Cranston wheeled to face the unprotected area of the long porch. His action was well timed. During the fray, two fighters had escaped the frontal attack. They had circled the house knowing that a rear attack was one method of entering the Shadow's impregnable fort. As Cranston wheeled, he sensed the flowing side of the Shadow's cloak.

Luke Conroy was the tough who had fired that shot. He had come up the parapet, helped up by Spud Claxter. Before Luke could deliver a second shot Cranston pressed the trigger of an automatic. The slug struck Luke's chest and sent him groaning from the parapet into the arms of Spud Claxter.

The Shadow's laugh resounded. Spud did not wait for more. Dragging Luke to his feet, the mob leader started for the hedge, dragging his benchman with him. Meanwhile, Cranston was weaving swiftly along the porch, firing shots at the blackness above the parapet to stop any new attackers. He sensed that the last of the attackers had fled. That, as proof of his belief, came the roar of starting motors from beyond the hedge.

Cranston knew that the raiders were beyond his reach: the men with the loot had probably gained a car parked in the road below the house. Staring through the darkness, he saw lights glaring from a house three hundred yards away. He knew that the gunfire had caused an alarm. The police would soon be here.

Cranston tried the front door of the house. He found it open. He crossed a gloomy hall and ascended a flight of stairs. He found an open door, a light from an inner room beyond it. Cranston entered. Close by the inner door he stumbled across the body of a servant. The man was rigid.

Peering into the inner room, Lamont Cranston saw four other figures. One was that of a servant sprawled upon the floor. The man held a gun. There was a desk in the centre of the room; there Cranston observed the other three. One was a man some sixty years of age. He was seated behind a mahogany desk. His hands were resting upon the woodwork. His dignified face, embellished with a white moustache, was straight towards a younger man who sat opposite. This fellow, too, had been caught in the midst of conversation.

The third man was at the side of the table. He was middle-aged, with a thick-set, hard-boiled countenance. His position was the most unusual of all. The man had half-risen from his chair. He was leaning heavily upon the desk, his weight supported by his left hand. The man's right hand was just above his pocket. It clutched the butt of a gun. Cranston could see the glimmer of the half-drawn

revolver. Like the others, this man was stiffened in the stupor of the death sleep.

Cranston did not need to enter. He looked across the room and saw the closed door of a safe. That told the final story. The loot had come from this room. The raiders had entered after delivery of the knock-out bombs. Cranston's laugh was soft but grim. He knew the reason for the handkerchiefs that had been upon the faces of the fleeing raiders. Beneath the covering of large handkerchiefs the successful raiders had worn small gas-masks to cover their nostrils. Goggles, perched in addition, to protect their eyes beneath the handkerchiefs.

Shouts from in front of the house. Police had been summoned by the neighbors. Cranston took a last glance at the desk in this silent room. He dare not stay any longer. He moved into the outer room, found an unlocked window, and emerged, safe descended by the heavy iron on the stone wall. As he reached the ground he could hear thumping footsteps pounding up the inner staircase. The arriving rescuers had made straight for the house. They had not yet begun a search of the grounds. Ghost-like, Cranston moved off, perching the heels of his hidden shape followed the line of the lane.

Though he had not frustrated crime, Cranston had wreaked vengeance upon a horde of toughs. But most important of all, he had verified a fact which he had suspected. The raiders had been equipped with masks that had proved an efficient protection against the fumes that they had looted.

The crooks had gained the neutralizer that they needed. How? Where? Cranston knew that the false hospital attendant had been a crook. He knew why Skeet Warrack had visited the blind alley at the back of Hoffer's chemist's shop. Crooks had peddled through the experiments made by Dr. Seton Lagwood.

The law was in ignorance of their methods. But not Lamont Cranston.

THE SHADOW'S MOVE.

AT noon the next day the police Commissioner, Wainwright Barth, encountered Lamont Cranston in the lobby of the Cobalt Club. Barth had come here for lunch. By mutual consent he and Cranston went to the grill-room, and there took a secluded corner.

"Think of it, Cranston!" exclaimed the Commissioner. "Five men overpowered! Helpless victims left in the grip of a terrible paralysis. We removed the five new victims to the Tallagrand Hospital, where they are under the personal supervision of Dr. Seton Lagwood. He believes that he can restore them to consciousness."

"What was the motive of the crime?" asked Cranston.

"We do not know as yet. We know that crime was involved, because of the terrific gun fight that took place outside the home of Felix Currian. Half a dozen dead crooks there—all apparently, members of the same gang. We believe that they tried to interfere with the activities of those who actually entered the house. Therefore, we estimate that there must have been at least a dozen of the original raiders."

A thin smile showed on Cranston's face. Barth's term of office had been short. It would probably end when Ralph Weston, the previous Commissioner, returned from abroad where he was engaged on some special mission. Barth as yet had not learned what experience had taught Weston—namely, that the Shadow actually existed, and was active in the eradication of crime. All of Barth's success as

Commissioner had been due to the regime that Weston had so effectively established in London. Weston's success, in turn, had been made possible through the hidden service of the Shadow. Though Weston was gone, the Shadow still remained.

"Felix Currian is a millionaire," explained Barth, unwillingly giving facts to the Shadow, "and his guest last night was a man named Gerald Morton. We believe that they were discussing financial matters, and that certain sums of money may have been in view."

"Morton is from Liverpool. A third man was present from the same city, and he is in the employ of a private detective agency there. Information from Liverpool has told us that Howland was assigned by the agency to accompany Morton to London."

"What about the others?" asked Cranston.

"Two servants," replied Barth. "We have learned their names from Mrs. Currian, who returned from holiday when informed of the case. There was a third servant, however, whom we have not yet located. He was employed there under the name of Thomas Devlin; but we believe that he was a crook, working for the raiders."

The topic ended for the time being. When the two club members were finishing their dessert, Cranston put a quiet question to Barth.

"You learned no more about the dead man, Trostle Valdeen?"

"Not a great deal," replied Barth. "He had been away on business, to a conference of some sort. We traced his movements, but they seem to hold no clue or to have any connection with the crime. We have been unable to trace the cartage people of whom Bernig spoke."

With this statement, Barth arose and glanced at his watch. He remarked



Skeet led the way down into the secret

that he must hurry to the hospital, as he wished to be there when Dr. Lagwood examined the patients.

Lamont Cranston finished a cigarette. In deliberate fashion he strolled upstairs to the lounge. He put through a telephone-call and spoke in the quiet tones that were Lamont Cranston's accustomed voice. But when the receiver dropped in place, a soft, whispered laugh came from those thin lips. It was the laugh of the Shadow.

There was a reason for the quiet mirth. The Shadow knew that it would require Barth fully thirty minutes to reach the hospital. But the man whom the Shadow had called would be there in fifteen. The Shadow, using the name of Cranston, had spoken to Dr. Rupert Sayre. Twenty minutes later, Rupert Sayre was seated in the little consulting-room of his friend, Freddy Rawson. The two men were engaged in brief conversation.

"Speaking of those death sleep victims," Rawson was saying, "the rule is that only staff physicians can see them. There have been times, though, when the rule has been stretched. Some of the staff are

going up there now; and I think it would be all right if you came along with me. After all, half the members of the staff hardly know each other. Simply act as if you were accustomed to the place, and I don't think you will be challenged by anyone."

They went upstairs. They found a small group of doctors studying the patients. Dr. Lagwood, tall and dignified, was making a few remarks. A few minutes after Sayre's arrival, Barth appeared.

Lagwood completed his discussion. The staff physicians left. Sayre, however, plucked Rawson's sleeve and held his friend in the corridor just as Lagwood appeared with Barth. The specialist was nodding; he crossed the corridor to his experimental room, and made a beckoning gesture. Barth followed. Sayre also stepped forward. The question which Barth was putting to Lagwood referred only to matters which the specialist had already discussed.

"I used this for the vapour treatment," explained Lagwood, indicating a little tent-like object. "I tried a special compound"—he picked up a small empty

bottle—"that I prepared after making blood tests. A neutraliser. I used it but sparingly. It produced no noticeable results."

Sayre had edged forward. He was looking at the bottle. Lagwood saw his interest and handed it to him. Sayre noted that the label merely bore the word "Neutraliser," and the number "6."

"Does Hoffer prepare your prescriptions also?" asked Lagwood, still accepting Sayre as a staff physician.

"He certainly does," replied Sayre promptly.

"A remarkable man," commented Lagwood, receiving the bottle and replacing it on the shelf. "Exact in his methods, thoroughly reliable. Well, Commissioner"—Lagwood paused to turn to Barth—"I can only say that I hold the same high hopes for these patients that I did for the others."

Sayre strolled out, while Barth was following. Rawson followed.

"I'll bet Lagwood would have had a fit if he'd realised you weren't on the staff," remarked Rawson. "But your remarks about Hoffer dismissed any suspicion he may have had. Lagwood thinks that Hoffer is the best chemist in London."

When Rupert Sayre drove away from the hospital he drove past Hoffer's shop. When he reached his office he put in a telephone call and talked with Lamont Cranston.

At the Cobalt Club Cranston made another telephone call after he had talked with Rupert Sayre. He talked in a voice that was remarkably like that of Dr. Lagwood. He remembered the physician's accents as he had heard them at Troston Valdons.

"Hallo—Mr. Hoffer?" There was a slight upward inflection in the pretended voice of Lagwood. "Yes, this is Dr. Lagwood. Tell me, Mr. Hoffer. The neutraliser—yes, No. 6. I want to be sure of its exact quantity. Yes, of course, I'll hold the wire."

Thin lips framed a smile as moments passed. Hoffer's thick voice suddenly recovered in apologetic fashion. Fearing Lagwood's tones, Cranston became indignant.

"What! You can't find it?" Cranston paused to hear Hoffer's spluttered excuses.

"I cannot understand your negligence. No, no, I do not need it to-day, but it should be available. You will make a new supply. The same amount. Very good, Mr. Hoffer. Yes, store it until I require it. This time be sure of where you place it."

Afternoon passed. Lamont Cranston remained at the Cobalt Club. No calls came from Burbank. The efforts of the agents were in temporary abeyance. Yet Cranston was quietly at ease. He was planning his actions, counting on the aid of Cliff Marsland.

Dark arrived. Lamont Cranston left the Cobalt Club. He became a clocked being of blackness. As the Shadow, he emerged from his car and arrived in the vicinity of Hoffer's Pharmacy. He entered the blind alley that Harry Vincent had described. He used the same method as Skeet when it came to dropping into Hoffer's cellar.

A tiny flashlight blinked. As readily as Skeet, he discovered the shelf. A new jar had replaced the stolen one. Cranston noted its label. His torch went out. Silently he left the place and returned to his car, parked not far away.

The chauffeur drove to a new destination when he heard the bidding of his



out. Cliff Marsland was there. He had come prepared, armed with the Shadow's instructions.

master's voice, through the speaking-tube. Again the chauffeur parked and waited while a shrouded figure glided from the car.

The chauffeur knew his master for an adventurer. He was accustomed to these peculiar trips. But he had never once suspected that there were two Lamont Cranstons. The real one and another who frequently took his place when required. It was not surprising that Stanley had never identified these strange car rides with the activities of the Shadow. Blasphemy! ignorant, the chauffeur parked within a few hundred yards of the most carefully hidden spot in all London—the entrance to the Shadow's sanctum in Hanover Square.

One hour passed. Stanley was dozing. Again came the quiet voice of Lamont Cranston, ordering Stanley to return to the neighbourhood of Hoffer's Pharmacy. The chauffeur obeyed as his accustomed fashion. Once more he was oblivious when the figure of the Shadow left the car.

The tiny electric torch glimmered through the cellar of the chemist's shop. It approached the shelf. Then came darkness. A pause, a trifling noise; a final glimmer. The rays revealed the big jar on the shelf, exactly as Cranston had found it. Nothing in its position or appearance could reveal the fact that a mysterious intruder had temporarily removed the bottle and replaced it.

Out in the car, Stanley sat up promptly as he heard the voice of Lamont Cranston ordering him to drive to the Cobble Club.

THE NEW MOB.

"HALLO, Cliff!"

Cliff Marsland looked up from a table at the Black Ship. He recognised the hard-faced ruffian who was sliding into an opposite chair. The fellow was known as Muggsy McGilly.

Cliff made no reply. Muggsy laughed. "It's okay, Cliff!" he assured. "Spud Claxter sent me here."

"Spud Claxter?" Cliff asked as if he had never heard the name. "Where's Luke? Have you seen him?"

"Luke got tripped in that fight out at Curran's," stated Muggsy. "An' he wasn't the only one either. He told Spud about you. Spud needs a new mob. I'm in it. So are you."

"For when?"

"To-night. There's big money in it. Two hundred quid. Are you in?"

Cliff nodded.

"Up in Soklow's old garage," stated Muggsy. "Half an hour. The boys are gon' out. Be there."

Cliff sat silent after Muggsy had left. Cliff knew what his task would be. He was to serve as one of the outside crew, just as Luke had served in the raid on Curran's. This was better than before. It would be the Shadow's liking. Cliff got up and strode from the public-house. He reached a call-box, and got through to Burbank.

The contact man ordered him to remain. Five minutes passed. The bell rang in the call-box. Cliff snatched the receiver from the hook. He spoke. Burbank responded. The contact man had communicated with the Shadow; the orders were for Cliff to go along with the mob.

It had been after nine o'clock when Muggsy had dropped into the Black Ship. It was nearly ten when Cliff entered the old garage and growled his name to the first man who challenged him. He was being initiated into Spud Claxter's methods. Louie and Gaby were again assigned to the wheels of the touring cars.

They were to pick up Spud's trail somewhere along a certain street.

The cars started from the garage. To-night, however, the second touring car had no excess passenger upon its rear bumper. One block from the old garage, a small saloon car took up the trail of the touring cars.

"There's a little saloon tailing us," growled a voice beside Cliff, in the rear seat of the second touring car. "What about it, Gaby?"

"Watch it," ordered the driver.

The touring car turned a corner. Back in the little saloon a tail-light blinked. A larger car—a sports two-seater—came speeding forward. It followed close as the saloon turned the corner. The crooks were turning another corner ahead. Again the tail-light blinked as the saloon car swung to the kerb.

The two-seater pulled up alongside. A man leaped from the driver's seat. At the same instant blackness arose from behind the wheel of the saloon. Cranston shifted swiftly to the two-seater.

The Shadow's new car swerved the corner. It passed rapidly on the crooks' cars, but did not approach too closely. The effect was apparent in the car in which Cliff was riding.

"See anything more of that fellow behind?" asked Gaby.

"There's a two-seater coming along," replied the man beside Cliff.

"Thought you said it was a saloon?"

"That's what it was. But it ain't there now."

"Then it wasn't tailing us," decided Gaby, with a short laugh.

The other crook agreed. Nevertheless, he cast wary glances toward the two-seater as it still kept in the rear. The crooks had reached a lighted thoroughfare; they shot forward in procession just as a traffic light changed. The two-seater was lost on the other side of the crossing. It pulled up to the kerb, just behind a taxi. When the lights gave the all clear the taxi sped forward. The driver had a passenger. The Shadow had abandoned his two-seater and taken the taxi instead.

In the touring car, Gaby was still thinking about the saloon car and the two-seater. Chuckling, he shot a remark to the silent gunman seated beside Cliff.

"What's following us now?" he asked.

"There's a taxi coming along," growled the disgruntled crook.

"There's thousands of 'em in London!" snorted Gaby. He laughed and turned another corner on to a wide avenue. Here a medley of cabs came into the picture. The crook in the rear seat could not have identified the Shadow's if he had tried.

Cliff Marsland felt sure that the cars were nearing their destination. Spud's car had led the course northward and westward. At last the front car swung toward the blackness of a side street, negotiating a left turn that gave difficulty to the touring cars. While Gaby was manoeuvring, a taxi cut left with a wild swing and headed over towards the far kerb of the side street.

"Stop here," came a quiet order.

The driver stopped short in front of a gloomy, old-fashioned building. A hand thrust him a pound note.

"Keep the change," said the quiet voice.

While the taxi-driver was still fondling the money that he had received, the figure of the Shadow appeared in the rear of the last touring car just as Gaby slowed on the accelerator. The Shadow was riding with the mob. Like Cliff, he had sensed that the end of the journey was

close. Along the darkened street he could risk another trip on the rear bumper.

The three cars swung to the right. They came to a stop upon a short, wide street. The toughs jumped to the pavement. They followed Spud's lead through an alley between two blocks of flats.

It was here that Spud gave his instructions as he pointed ahead. He was explaining the location of a block of flats, the corner of which was just visible from that spot. Spud was terse.

"We're got to cover it all round," he said. "Muggsy and Marsland pick the fire-escape. The rest keep farther off. Two of you operate the front door. Louie and Gaby will do. We don't need you in the cars to-night."

The men moved toward the stated positions. Cliff found himself with Muggsy, in a short, blind alley that was by the foot of the fire-escape. Muggsy moved forward to inspect the darkness. Cliff was about to follow when a soft hiss restrained him. Cliff caught a whispered command. It was from the Shadow, unseen in the darkness.

Muggsy returned, passing the lighted entrance to the fire-escape. Cliff put a prompt question, one that the Shadow had inspired.

"Here, Muggsy," suggested Cliff, "get out to Spud and ask him what floor the job is on. We ought to know."

"So we ought," agreed Muggsy.

He sidled out from the alley. Cliff caught sight of a blackened shape that moved swiftly to the fire-escape, unseen by the departing crook. Once inside the maze of ironwork, the Shadow's form became invisible. Muggsy returned. He had found Spud across the street.

"Fourth floor," informed Muggsy. "Side towards this street. Number 40, Spud says."

Within the fire-escape, Lamont Cranston moved into the blackness. Silently his form was gliding upward. His keen ears had caught Muggsy's words. The Shadow was moving to his post.

While the Shadow was trailing crooks bent on new crime, Commissioner Barth and Detective Joe Carton were concerning themselves with old events. The two representatives of the Law were at the Talleyrand Hospital, in conference with Dr. Seton Lagwood.

The first of the death-sleep patients had recovered. The others were showing signs of life. Dr. Lagwood conducted Barth and Carton along a corridor into a private room. There they saw Gerald Morton propped, white-faced, upon the pillows of a cot.

Despite his pallor, Morton seemed very much awake. His eyes were clear as they saw the visitors.

"Hallo, doc! Who are your friends?"

"Commissioner Barth," introduced Lagwood, "and Detective Carton, from Scotland Yard. Mr. Carton has a question he would like answered. You were accompanied from Liverpool by a private detective. The man was with you at Curran's—one of the victims, in fact. Why was he with you? Did you fear robbery? Did you have valuables with you?"

"Yes," replied Morton. "Securities to deliver to Curran."

Lagwood turned to Carton. The detective nodded. This gave him the start he wanted. Morton had been robbed, but apparently did not know it as yet. Lagwood's gesture indicated that it would be unwise to worry him with the news.

Barth turned toward the door. Carton

was about to follow when Morton opened his eyes and again smiled. He spoke, half in a tone of surprise.

"You're going?" he queried. "I wanted to talk longer—"

"Wait until the morning," interposed Lagwood. "Mr. Carton will be back then—"

"All right," agreed Morton. "Tomorrow morning will be all right. Just so long as I can talk before Wednesday night—"

"Carton stopped abruptly. "Wednesday night?" he queried. "This is Wednesday night—"

Morton swung in the bed and propped his head on one elbow.

"Wednesday night?" he echoed. "It—it can't be. Why, I was at Currian's last night—Monday night. I—I have been asleep for two days? I've got to talk! I know that crooks must have grabbed my securities. Currian's safe was open. They could have gone through it. But that's nothing! To-night—Wednesday night—you can't stop me! I'm going to talk!"

"Somebody knew I was going to Currian's," blurted Morton. "A servant was there—one Currian was suspicious about—that's why we had guns ready. I had that detective with me. He was armed, too. But nobody—not even a detective—knew why I was bringing those securities to Currian. Even Currian didn't know. He knew I wanted to borrow as much as I could get on them, he was giving me a cheque. But he didn't know why I wanted the money. But I'll tell you why. Did you ever hear of Rufus Galdier? Big millionaire who collects rare jewels. Well, he's selling some of them to-night. Going to have the whole lot in his flat. Here in London—Wednesday night—Rufus Galdier."

Morton paused for breath.

"Nobody knew I was borrowing money from Currian so I could go to Galdier's and bid for some of those gems. A friend up in Liverpool told me about the sale. Big banker there, Tony Sharman. He couldn't get away to attend it. Told me to use his name when I called on Galdier. Sharman was worried. Said Galdier had been having those private sales too often."

Morton was talking tersely, brokenly. "Told me to get a private detective. Suggested phoning Galdier. Advised him to have the police there. But I never phoned Galdier. I went to Currian's. Woke up here. Crooks found out about Currian's—"

"And you reckon," interrupted Carton, "that there's an even chance they know about Galdier's?"

"I am certainly not!" exclaimed Morton, dropping back on the pillow.

"I agree with you," asserted Carton, turning to Barth. "We're up against hot crime, sir. The crooks are moving fast to keep ahead of us. There was an inside man at Currian's—a servant—and you can bet there'll be an inside man at Galdier's."

Carton turned to Lagwood. He indicated Morton, propped up in bed.

"The patient is yours, doctor," declared the detective. "Hope he didn't overtax himself, but he looks better now he's got that worry off his chest."

Without further hesitation, Carton strode toward the door.

"You're calling the Yard?" questioned Barth, as they reached the corridor. "Getting some men up there?"

"Yes, sir," replied Carton. "But if you'll allow the suggestion, I think we ought to 'phone Galdier and put him on the guard. You ought to do it. He'll listen to you. I can be on another 'phone getting the squad in position."

"You're right," agreed Barth.

The Commissioner had reached a room where a telephone showed on a table. Carton kept on while Barth went in to send his call to Rufus Galdier at the Castellian Mansions. Gerald Morton's story was bringing prompt results. It was no shot in the dark. For the Castellian Mansions were located in the huge block of flats that Sped Claxier's mob had already surrounded.

Cranston had reached the fourth floor of the fire-escape. Here he had found a steel door that opened outward. Its outer knob would not turn. It was latched. Yet it had not troubled him. Using blackened tools, he had removed the knob, then probed within. The latch had yielded. Cranston had ended its usefulness. Yet the Shadow, after entering, had paid but a short visit to the corridor. He had satisfied himself that all was well in Galdier's flat. He had heard muffled voices from within. Then he had returned beyond the steel door. It was opened only to a narrow slit. Cranston, through this



Cliff dropped the bogus doctor with a swinging blow. The game was up!

crevice, commanded a view of the corridor.

Inside Rufus Galdier's flat nearly a dozen guests were enjoying the rich man's hospitality. Rufus Galdier, tall, portly and genial, was talking to two guests when a servant approached and spoke in a low tone. The millionaire walked hurriedly from the living-room and entered his study.

"Did you hear that, Huring?" asked one of the two men to whom Galdier had been talking. "The servant said the 'phone call was very urgent—from the Commissioner of Police, Scotland Yard."

"Odd, wasn't it?" commented Huring. With that he walked away.

Peiman, a corpulent, lethargic individual, showed sudden keenness. He watched Huring stroll towards the entrance hall of the flat. A moment later he noted a slight darkening from the entry, as though someone had extinguished the light. The glow came on again. Huring came back into the living-room.

Peiman grew suddenly suspicious. He did not like Huring. The man looked like an interloper, despite his smooth-dressing

dress-suit. He wondered how the fellow had crashed into this high social gathering. While he was still pondering on this question, he kept his eyes towards Huring. Hence he did not see the cause of the sudden gasp that came from nearly everyone present. Peiman turned. Rufus Galdier had stepped from his study, followed by a servant. Both the millionaire and the servant were holding leveled revolvers.

"No one is to move!" cried Galdier sternly. "I am acting with authority of the police. Commissioner. My instructions are to hold everyone here in this room, and I have full right to take any measures I believe necessary."

A hush fell over the group. Galdier looked from man to man.

"Fortunately," he said, "I have not displayed my jewels. Hence the moment of danger has not yet arrived. The Commissioner has warned me that someone present may be the agent of criminals who plan an attack upon this flat. The police are already on their way to prevent the raid."

Peiman looked toward Huring.

"There's the inside man!" he exclaimed. "Huring! He heard the servant say the Commissioner was on the 'phone."

Huring raised his head to stare at his accuser.

"I heard nothing," he growled. "You were the man who heard what the servant said, and you told me."

"And then," asserted Peiman, stepping forward, "you went into the hall. You turned the light off and turned it on again. I saw the reflection against the wall. It was like a signal."

"Enough!" exclaimed Galdier. "Huring is the man we want. Cover him, Roberts"—thus to the servant—"and shoot to kill if he makes a move! Come, Huring! Let's hear you talk! Who are the others in this business?"

Outside in the corridor a door had opened on the side opposite to Galdier's flat. From it came three roughly clad men, wearing large handkerchiefs over their faces. Cranston could detect the bridge of small gas-masks beneath. Each raider was armed with a gun and small bombs shaped like pineapples. They were making for the door of Galdier's apartment when a sudden blast brought them to a pause. From the door to the fire-escape came a figure cloaked in black. Crooks stared as they saw the Shadow.

A fourth man was coming from the door of the empty flat. His left hand held a revolver, his right a bomb. He did not hesitate for an instant. He threw the bomb. It came lobbing down the corridor and struck the door three feet in front of the Shadow. A thick cloud of green vapour rose about the shadowed figure. Pungent fumes filled the crowded space of the corridor as the cloud disintegrated.

The figure of the Shadow, back against the steel door, was standing as rigid as a statue. The crooks were silent; to have uttered a laugh might have meant inhalation of those paralyzing fumes. But caution bared them as they stared at the motionless automatic musket that projected from the Shadow's black-gloved fist.

There had been no occasion to deliver death to nervous criminals; there was cause to kill the Shadow. Almost with one accord the three crooks in the corridor swung their guns, intent on riddling the

Shadow with bullets that would spell his instant doom.

As things swung, the incredible happened. The Shadow's form moved forward. The automatic broke the silence before a single figure pressed trigger of revolver. As crooks staggered in the gas-filled corridor, the coffin of the Shadow's cloak fell loose. The light revealed what lay beneath: but it did not show the face of the Shadow. Instead, it enabled the staggering crooks to glimpse a gas-mask that the Shadow wore. He, too, had prepared himself against the possibility that he knew would play a part in that raid.

As three wounded gunmen went sprawling away from the door to Golder's flat, the man at the opposite door managed to fire one quick shot on behalf of his overpowered companions. The bullet whistled past the Shadow's shoulder. An automatic spoke; the crook came tumbling into the corridor. Then came a slam of the door behind him. The Shadow stood triumphant.

Hearing the shots in the corridor, Hurling made a sudden leap in that direction, yanking a revolver from his pocket as he fled. Roberts fired. His shot went wide. Hurling reached the door, yanked it open, and staggered back. He was face to face with the Shadow. The master fighter had heard the shot from within. Clutching collar raised, he held an automatic straight between the eyes. The crook moved backward, then dropped his gun. Roberts and Golder pounced upon him.

Cranston had reached the edge of the living-room. He wanted to make sure that Golder's jewels were safe. He saw that the situation was in control. At that instant he whirled as he heard a sound behind him. The last wounded raider had risen and was staggering in dazed, hopeless fashion. His hands were clutched to his back. He could not have aimed his revolver even had he held it. But as Cranston wheeled the crook performed a last, hopeless action. Sprawling forward, he launched one arm and sent a gas bomb hurtling into Golder's living-room.

The missile sped low past Cranston's forward sweeping form. It struck squarely at the feet of a milling group where Hurling had waded free and men were trying vainly to clutch him. One second later the shouts of the stragglers had died, with the screams of excited women. The Shadow stared.

Every person had stiffened. The few who were seated or who were close to the wall, remained balanced in the very pose wherein the gas had captured them. But the others could no longer stand. Bodies thudded to the floor and rolled into grotesque positions.

Out in the corridor, the crook who had fired the first shot staggered dead on the floor. The gas had cleared from the corridor; its action seemed as short as it was certain. The door of the opposite flat opened. A crouched figure emerged. This man, like the other raiders, was wearing a large handkerchief over his face. His gait told his identity. The man was Skeet. Canny and cautious, he had sent the others ahead.

Skeet stared toward the far end of the corridor. The raid was off. Flight was the only thing left. But Skeet had a quick tact to perfection. He kept the gas-masks from his dead comrades. He seized their unused bombs. Then he scudded along the corridor, heading for the staircase inside the building.

Cranston broke suddenly away from the strange sight which had astounded him. He swam out into the corridor. He saw

the unmasked raiders, their handkerchiefs tumbled above their heads. Swiftly he started in pursuit, knowing that someone must have escaped. Skeet had reached the stairs. His pursuer heard his footsteps pounding downward. Cranston followed.

Whistles were shrilling round about the block of flats. Barking revolvers; shots outside. Spud's outfit had spotted the arrival of the police. They were running for it. As Skeet came down into the gloomy lobby of the big building, the front doors swung open and half a dozen policemen arrived face to face with the fleeing crook.

Skeet ducked back. The gas-masks went bouncing down the stairs. A constable sprang for them, recognizing what they were. Plain-clothes men, armed, came into view, firing wildly. Then Skeet threw a bomb. It burst amongst the police. Blue coats became raged. The stooping man held his position, the others toppled—all save one who was just within the door. He waved sideways and stood leaning in crazy fashion, revolver levelled, finger on the trigger.

Skeet scudded forward. He grabbed the gas-masks and sprang toward the door just as Cranston arrived at the top of the stairs. An automatic barked. Its shots, clipping downward from an angle, were deflected by a brass bar just above the door. That bit of luck saved Skeet's life.

A taxi was standing in the street. Skeet pounced into it, and rammed a revolver against the driver's neck. The cab shot away as Cranston reached the door. A squad car was rounding the corner. Cranston waited as it swung in between him and the cab. Revolvers barked from the police car, then came a burst of greenish smoke.

The car went skidding across the street and smashed against the wall, just as the taxi rounded the corner. Skeet had tossed another bomb. The men in the patrol car had panicked out instantly. They were seated rigid in their wrecked car.

Skeet had eliminated the police squad. He had stopped the patrol car. For the moment no other forces of the Law were near. Cranston took that opportunity to make his own departure. Swiftly he glided across the street and chose a darkened spot between two blocks of flats.

A sinister laugh sounded through the gloom. With underlings eliminated, the Shadow would force the hand of the super crook who had organized this evil game.

THE BIG SHOT DECIDES.

On the following morning, Wolf Barlan was seated by the window of his living-room reading the details of last night's raid. An involuntary snarl came from the big shot's lips. Wolf knew that crime had failed; he could not, however, understand all that had happened. The latch of the door clicked softly. Wolf looked up and gripped a revolver that he carried in the pocket of his dressing-gown. The door opened. It was Spud Claxter. The mob leader had a duplicate key to the room.

"What's the idea?" snarled Wolf, as soon as Spud had closed the door behind him. "I told you to stay away from here."

"It's all right, Wolf," interposed Spud. "Nobody followed me here. Listen, Wolf. I couldn't give you all the facts over the 'phone. I had to get here to tell you about last night."

"Well, what about it?"

"The Shadow again."

"The Shadow? How did he get mixed up in it?"

Spud told him what had happened, as far as he had seen and heard the affair at

Rufus Golder's flat, and how Skeet had got away by passing the police in the hall and in the patrol car, how he had boarded a taxi to take him clear of pursuit, and then passed the taxi-driver so that the man wrecked his vehicle and killed himself.

Wolf had risen. He was pacing back and forth recalling all that Spud had related. When he spoke, his tone was curt.

"To begin with," he told Spud, "you're short of a raiding mob. The only bloke left is Skeet. He seems to be the best of the lot. He uses his brains. We can count on him to lead the next raid. You'll have to pick the four best toughs you've got in the outside crew. Who are they?"

"Louie and Gabby, to begin with," returned Spud promptly. "Then there's Muggsy and Cliff Marsland." "Marsland? eh? I've heard of him. Listen, Spud, we're going to pull something that'll turn this town upside down. This is it!"

He spoke in husky whispers, and the details of his new plan brought Spud's eyes bulging from his head.

"You fix the outside mob," Wolf concluded. "Show 'em how to work things. Understand?"

"I've got it," nodded Spud. "But—Wolf—I've been thinking. There's one guy lying up there at the hospital who might blab—that inside man you had at Golder's."

"Don't worry," interrupted Wolf, with an evil leer. "The fellow you mean is Bad Jardell. He was at Golder's under the name of Hurling. He's being watched by another fellow—an inside man—that I've got planted inside the hospital."

"But Skeet ain't up at the place no longer."

"Crane!" ordered Wolf. "I'm taking care of things there. Lay low till dark. Spud. Then round up your new gang and get them to the hide-out. After that hire any dumb toughs for the outside mob."

Dusk. Cliff Marsland was standing by a table in a lawdry room. This was the place he used for temporary living quarters in the underworld. The door was locked; Cliff was holding a small package that he had brought in his pocket. Last night, Cliff knew, a gang of selected raiders had met their Waterloo in the service of Spud Claxter. It was obvious that Spud would have to get new men, and Cliff knew that he might be chosen. He had reported that fact to the Shadow.

This was the Shadow's answer. Cliff placed the box upon the table. He opened the envelope. He read coded hints that had been inscribed in ink of vivid blue. Cliff was familiar with the code. He read the message easily, then watched the writing vanish. That was the way with orders from the Shadow. Cliff opened the box. Inside was a tiny leather bag, from which he drew a cylinder of metal. It was an hypodermic syringe. He loaded. Cliff examined it carefully, then replaced it in the bag. He put the bag in his coat pocket.

A cautious knock sounded at the door. Cliff tossed the little box out of sight. He went to the door and growled a challenge. A whispered voice gave a pass word. Cliff unbolted. A scrawny, pasty-faced crook entered. Cliff knew the fellow. Skeet Wurrek. He realised instantly that Skeet must be a member of the selected raiding squad. Skeet beckoned. Cliff followed. They went down the stairs. Skeet glanced cautiously about as he stepped into the

Don't miss the sensational developments in this week's long instalment of

The DRIFTER



THE FIRST ORDRAL.

BEFORE I was removed to Barchester Prison from my cell below the court, the door of the cell opened and Tom Turner came in, accompanied by a warder.

"I've got permission to see you instead of your mother, Joe," he said. "She cannot come."

"Tom, tell me, is she all right?" I cried, a prey to sudden dread.

"Yes, was she in, Joe?" he answered quickly. "You can take it from me she is. I wouldn't lie to you!"

"Poor, honest Tom. He wouldn't lie to me, eh? He lied then, all right, but what would you have done in his place?"

"Joe," said Tom, and his face was working tremulously, "you know what I think about this—you know that I believe in you and—and I want you to know I'll always be your pal."

His voice broke and there were tears in his eyes.

Tom's time was up, and as the cell door clanged shut behind him at a bang through my heart like a knell sounding the end for me of all contact with the outside world for five long, weary years.

Hatred and impatient rage surged in me and I ground my teeth in helpless fury. I can see quite clearly now that even then a change was taking place in me.

Not yet, however, was I to know the full tortures through which it was ordained that I should pass. Some realization of that came to me during the days which followed my conviction, for I was kept in Barchester Prison, there to be forged before being removed to the penal prison to which I was to be sent.

To add to my despair, my mother was desperately ill. It was no faint which had overtaken her on hearing my sentence. It was a stroke, and I laid that also to the account of Spider Mullins.

Then one morning I was taken before the prison governor.

"I'm afraid I have had news for you, Blake," he said quietly.

I stared at him, white-faced.

"Your mother died at nine o'clock this morning," he said.

I did not sleep that night, but lay rigid on my bed, staring up into the darkness with

a fierce and fixed intensity. So my mother was dead, her end brought on by the shock of my arrest and sentence for a crime of which I was innocent.

So this was how life treated you? The guilty went free and prospered whilst the innocent suffered. What had my mother ever done, poor, gentle soul, that she should have been afflicted with this last, great crowning sorrow? What had she ever done that her life should have been one long and hopeless struggle, ended first with my drunken father and then with me?

Two mornings later a warder entered my cell.

"Leave your jacket off, Blake, and come with me!" he ordered.

So the moment had arrived. The days and nights of mental torture spent in wondering when I was to be flogged were ended. I was to be flogged now.

In shirt and trousers, striving desperately to steel myself for what was to come, I walked with him to the prison gymnasium, where a tall triangle of wood had been erected.

The prison governor was waiting there, together with the doctor and a couple of muscular warders.

"Take his shirt off!" said the doctor.

My shirt was pulled off and the doctor made a brief examination of my throat, heart, and lungs. He looked pale, and I noticed his fingers were trembling. What had he to tremble about? It was I who should have been trembling.

Stepping back, he nodded to the governor, who gave an order to the warders. I was seized by the arms and marched forward to the triangle. My wrists were strapped together and pulled up towards the apex of the triangle, then each of my ankles were strapped to the foot of the triangle beams. My trousers were loosened, a leather belt was adjusted around my neck, and another round the lower part of my back, then all was ready.

I heard a movement behind me as a warder took up position, the cat in his hand. The doctor had moved so that he could watch my face. I closed my eyes and clenched my teeth.

"One!"

**STARTING NEXT WEEK
THE GANG-SMASHER
AGAIN!**

By Hugh Clevely

(See page 526 for full details.)

A GRIPPING
STORY OF
INTENSE
HUMAN
INTEREST

**By GEO: E.
ROCHESTER**

The things whistled through the air to smash cruelly against my back.

"Two!"

Again the things crashed against my bare and quivering flesh. But my lip to keep back a groan. Surely no pain could be so great as this.

It could. Again and yet again the whistling things smashed sickeningly against my bruised and lacerated flesh, wringing a groan of sheer agony from my salty lips.

The doctor stepped forward, looked at me, then motioned to them to continue.

Smash!

How many I had taken I did not know. I was in the grip of a deadly nausea, there was a blackness before my eyes and a roaring in my ears. The triangle, everything, had ceased to exist for me. I was in hell, being tortured through all eternity by that scorching, searing crash which assailed with each pitiless regularity against my back.

Then it ceased and I lurched there limp against the triangle. They released me and supported me whilst the doctor held a stimulant to my lips.

"He was nearer collapse than I thought," I heard him mutter to the governor. "Better have him sent to the prison hospital!"

But no hospital could mend the effects that searing lash had had on me, for although my back would heal, I had been branded as a brute, and, in the branding, something had been killed in me and something new been born.

EXIT PRISON.

FROM Barchester Prison I was removed to the grim convict prison of Blackmoor, there to serve my sentence. I will not dwell here on my long and bitter sorrow in what was, to me, a living tomb. How else is to say that through those weary days and endless nights I came to know myself for the man I had become and to see quite clearly stretching out before me the road which Destiny had planned for me and fitted me to tread.

So at the end of my time I emerged from Blackmoor not only as a free man, but as a man convinced—as I am still convinced to this hour—that on behalf of his fellow men he had a certain bounden duty to perform.

Before embarking on the performance of that duty, however, there was a certain

private matter of my own to be attended to, and that was a settlement with Spider Mullins. I knew about what him and what he was at present doing, for Tom Turner had kept me informed both in his letters and during his twice-weekly visits to see me in Blackmoor.

Spider Mullins had blossomed forth as a bookmaker and was, Tom said, making a comfortable living by laying the odds at the greyhound track. He was living at Charlies Street, a poorish quarter of Barchester, the houses being divided into upstairs and downstairs apartments. He occupied a flat on the ground floor and employed a daily woman to clean up for him and prepare his meals. He still had the same old gang round him, Tom said, and I suppose he found them useful in his bookmaking business.

However, neither Spider Mullins nor his gang held any terrors for me by now, for I was a different man entirely to that poor, weak-willed creature he had so heartlessly used for his own ends that fateful Saturday night. I had changed not only mentally but physically. The look of a regular prison food, the strict discipline and the hard work in the quarry had hardened my muscles and toughened me out of all semblance of the weakly creature I once had been. My eyes were keen, I walked with a firm step, my voice was hard, bitter and resolute—how bitter and resolute, only I knew.

I arrived in Barchester late at night on the day of my release from Blackmoor. I had turned no one of my coming, not even Tom Turner. For I wanted Spider Mullins to be the first to know I was in Barchester, and I wanted it also to be a surprise for him. I knew where Charlies Street was, and I made my way there, taking care to avoid the vicinity of Mill Street and other regular haunts of mine in days now past.

It was close on midnight when I reached Charlies Street and at that late hour the dismal, ill-lighted street was practically deserted. By casual but purposeful inquiry I had located the flat occupied by Spider Mullins' door, and with my jacket collar turned up and my cap pulled well down over my eyes, I walked slowly past the house.

There was only one small front window of the bottom-floor flat, and the blind was up, so that I could see into the room, which was generally used as a combined living-room, with the kitchen at the back, it was a pretty safe bet that Spider Mullins was not yet in. I had not, however, expected him to be in, for midnight would be an early hour for him. At least, it had been an early hour for him in the old days, and in spite of his bookmaking business, I doubted if he had changed his habits much.

Reaching the end of the street, I turned the corner and retraced my steps along the dark and narrow way which lay at the rear of the street. This lane was lit on one side by the yard wall of the houses, and on the other by a wooden fence beyond which lay the railway track.

By carefully counting the yard doors, I arrived at the door of Spider Mullins' yard. With a cautious glance about me in the darkness, I tried the door. It was locked, and the top of the wall was well out of my reach. I was prepared for this, however, for for not so long had I planned my every move, not only but on many times, back there in my cell at Blackmoor.

Moving quietly away and hugging the black shadow of the wall, I commenced to try the doors of the adjoining yards. They wouldn't all be locked. I was confident of that, nor was I mistaken, for the fourth door I tried opened under the stealthy pressure of my hand.

Inching it open in case it cracked, I smothered a curse as I saw there was a light in the lower kitchen window a few paces away from the small window I had tried. But the blind was down, and if I made no noise the chances were I would not be detected.

In the yellow glimmer from the window, I saw beside me the dark bulk of a small outdoor coal-cellar, or shed. It backed against the wall and shut the door of the yard. I was shoving the yard door shut behind me. I gripped the low, sloping roof, and with the utmost stealth I swung myself up on to it. A few moments later I was crouched on top

of the wall and creeping warily along it towards Spider Mullins' yard. In the darkness there was little risk of my being seen, even by anyone looking out of some upstairs window, but all the same, I was prepared for instant flight should I be suddenly challenged and the alarm raised.

I reached Spider Mullins' yard without incident, however, and noting the yard was in shadow and in darkness as the front one had been, I dropped lightly down into the yard. Before reaching Barchester I had made three purchases with the money given me on my discharge. One was a pair of cheap gloves, the other was a good, strong penknife, and the third was a small electric torch.

Pulling on the gloves, I took the precaution of unlocking the yard door. Then, drawing the penknife from my pocket, I moved silently as a shadow towards the kitchen window. Slipping the blade of the knife under the sashes of the window, I forced back the catch. This was new work to me, but you do not dwell as I had done in a prison like Blackmoor without learning how to do a simple little job like that.

Returning the knife to my pocket, I stealthily raised the sash inch by inch and clambered through into the kitchen. Straightening up, I stood tense and rigid, listening with care attuned to catch the slightest sound. But nothing moved, nothing stirred, and satisfied that I had the place to myself, I softly closed the window. Then, taking my electric torch from my pocket, I pressed the switch and took swift stock of my surroundings.

The small kitchen in which I was standing was sparsely furnished with chair and table, a small stange and a ladder. There was little else, and I moved out into the shed and returned to the passage-way which led to the combined living-room and bedroom. In this latter room I had to be more careful than I had been in the kitchen, for the blind was not drawn nor did I wish to draw it in case Spider Mullins might suspect that something was amiss. In this room, however, which might happen at any moment.

I listened with straining ears to hear if anyone was approaching along the street outside. But not a sound disturbed the stillness, and, satisfied that I had a few moments grace, I turned a quick sweep round with the beam of the torch.

Before I stepped out the thin ray of light, plunging the room again into darkness, it had revealed to me a table covered with a cloth in the centre of the floor, an old, resin-covered armchair by the fireplace, a plain, cheap sideboard which seemed to serve also as a dressing-table, and an empty bed against the wall opposite the window.

Groping my way across the room, I seated myself in the armchair and settled down to wait. Slowly, inexorably, the time dragged by, but I found a quaint and pleasurable interest in sitting there, thinking of what I intended to say and do to Spider Mullins. I was conscious, also, of a faint sense of uneasiness. It seemed incredible that the long and weary years of waiting had come to an end and that here I was, a free man, sitting waiting to settle my account with Spider Mullins.

Suddenly I turned. Footsteps and voices were approaching along the quiet street. I muttered a stifled curse. Was the rat bringing some friends home with him? I wanted my friends of old to be present at my interview, for I wanted a free hand to deal with him alone.

The footsteps and voices halted at the street door. A key was inserted in the lock and the door opened. Then I heard the hateful voice of Spider Mullins, a little deeper, however, than when I had last heard it years ago.

"Come on in and have a hot drink," he said. "I've got plenty of booze in it."

I was out of my chair and under the bed before the room door could open and the light be switched on. A cowardly belt on my forehead, and a blow of the palm I'd taken to pressure this interview with Spider Mullins.

Not at all. It was, I hoped, merely a postponement of the interview until his friends should have gone, for the palm I'd taken had been directed solely to one end, which was

to have Spider Mullins entirely to myself without the interference of anybody.

He came into the room accompanied by at least three other men, so far as I could judge by their voices. I recognized the rough voice of Jim Bates, the shrill, high-pitched tones of Charlie Clegg, and the deep, rumbling voice of Sam Hopper. It was plain evidence that the whole lot of them had been drinking, for there was plenty of coarse laughter and loudness accompanied by the clink of bottles and glasses being produced from the sideboard.

"Up yourselves!" said Spider Mullins. "There's plenty more where that came from and we'll never run dry if things go on the way they're going!"

He laughed, and so did Jim Bates and Charlie Clegg.

"Had a good night then, Spider?" asked Sam Hopper, and I judged by that that he had but recently joined the party.

"I've made about a hundred and twenty smackers, I reckon," said Spider Mullins, with another laugh of self-satisfaction. "That was my favorite came up to-night, and I had the tip to back Brunson's dog that turned up at a hundred-to-eight in the last race."

"I wonder you live in a place like this, taking it in the way you're doing," commented Sam Hopper.

"Oh, it suits me all right," replied Spider Mullins. "It's cheap and it's handy, and it'll do me for another year or so yet."

The talk then became general for a while, intermingled with the rattling of glasses, then suddenly Charlie Clegg said:

"Any of you chap seen a paper to-night?"

"Yes, why?" demanded Hopper.

"I was wondering if there's anything in it about Joe Slade," said Clegg. "Tom Turner was telling me about the other day that he's due out this week."

"Well, they wouldn't put it in the papers if he was out, would they?" snapped Spider Mullins.

"It might in the local evening paper," said Clegg. "They do sometimes, you know."

"I didn't see anything about him," said Hopper. Then he added conversationally:

"I wonder what that chap'll do when he comes out? D'you think he'll have the face to come back and see me?"

"Shouldn't wonder!" sneered Spider Mullins. "I don't suppose he's got the guts to go anywhere else. But by gee," he added viciously, "if he starts trying to say it was me who did that job, like he did at his trial, I'll have his face in my arm!"

"He won't say that, Spider," grunted Jim Bates. "Lead, not to your face, he won't. He's too damned scared of you for that!"

"Well, he'd better not say it either in my face or behind my back, or I'll settle him good and proper," grunted Spider Mullins. "I'll put the fear of death into him if he so much as dares to open his mouth!"

This was good. Hidden under the bed a few feet from Spider Mullins, I was enjoying it immensely. I chuckled to myself. I hoped they'd say some more things like that to know exactly what they thought about me. It made anticipation of what I was about to do all the sweeter.

"I don't suppose he'll come back," said Jim Bates. "Now that his mother's dead there's nothing to bring him to Barchester."

"Oh, he'll be back!" snorted Spider Mullins. "He'll be coming round Tom Turner and that bunch, you'll see. But there's one thing," he added with a spiteful laugh.

"I'll bet he won't try a snook again. Five years in good and twenty lashes with the cat'll put that snook back in his eye."

"I wonder the cat didn't kill him," said Jim Bates.

"He must have been strong enough to take it or they wouldn't have given it to him," said Sam Hopper. "The judge always has to have the report of the cat."

The talk drifted away from the subject of myself and became general again, then, after a few more drinks, the party showed signs of breaking up.

"Ah, come on, let's get away off to bed!" said Sam Hopper. "See you to-morrow, Spider!"

"Sure!" yawned Spider. "I'll let the lot of you out and lock the door!"

The party drifted from the room and stood awaiting for a few moments on the door step. Satisfied that the guests were going, I slid out from beneath the door and straightened up. The door of the room was standing open. I reached it in four swift and silent strides and took up my stance behind it. I waited the door to be between myself and Spider Mullins when he returned to the room.

Having hidden his pale good-night, he thumped and locked the door and came back into the room. Blithely unconscious of my presence, he walked towards the table. His back was towards me and I studied him gloomily. He had not changed much in thirty years during the years which had passed. He was still the same slightly built, weedy creature I had known. Picking up a bottle, he commenced to pour himself out another drink.

"Well, Spider?" I said.

He whistled, the bottle slipping from his fingers to fall with a crash to the floor.

"You!" he gasped, staring at me in a stark astonishment that was almost comical. "You!" he said, staring at me from the door with a sweep of my arm and advancing a pace.

His eyes narrowed and he thrust forward his head. He was beginning to recover from his first shock of astonishment.

"How the hell did you get in here?"

"Never mind about that!" I retorted. "I'm in. That's all that matters. And this is just you and me—alone!"

He was eyeing me intently, and he must have read the change in me. His fingers closed round the neck of a bottle standing on the table.

"I don't know how you got in," he snarled, "but you'll damned well get out, see? If I have any trouble with you, I'll smash your face in!"

I laughed in genuine amusement.

"Oh, no! You'll not smash my face in, my dear Mr. Mullins!" I said. "You might have done it once, but not now. It's your face going to be smashed. I'm going to smash every bone in your dirty little body. All I'll leave you is a spark of life inside you, because I want to swing for you. But before I leave this room," I went on, advancing on him, "I'll have out of you a signed confession about how you framed me."

He laid off, jerking my head aside as, with a lightning movement, he snatched up the bottle and hurled it full at me. It whistled past my head to smash into smithereens against the wall behind me—and then I was on him.

I drove in at him with all the pent-up rage of years unleashed. My collared, iron-hard fist smashed up, crashing with each terrific force to his jaw that it lifted him clean off his feet. He went hurtling backwards, staggered on his heels a pace, then went down with a crash, the back of his head striking the heavy brass fender round the fireplace.

"Come on, get up!" I panted, glaring at him with fists clenched ready. "That's past a start!"

He did not move. He lay there rigid, stretched out on the worn hearthrug, his feet towards the table, his head resting on the fender. And I glared at him, waiting for something about his dreadful impossibility that startled me. I stepped forward and stared down at him. His eyes were wide open, fixed and expressionless, staring up past me towards the ceiling.

With a catch of my breath, I stooped over him. And then I saw it. In the centre of the front of the fender was a pointed, brass knob fixed there for decorative purposes. The back of Spider Mullins' head had struck the knob and it had pierced his skull, holding his head there, fixed and rigid.

He was dead!

IN LONDON.

STRAIGHTENING UP, I stepped back a pace and stood staring down at that rigid body. I felt no pity for him, but just a momentary fear of the consequences and a burning rage to think that even in his death it should bring me back within the grim shadow of the Law.

I had not meant to kill him, but would the Law believe that? No, no more than it had

believed the story I had told at my trial before Mr. Justice Grahame. In fact, the story I had told then—the truth I had told, if only the fools knew it—would now be held against me as the motive for this killing. It would be said that the accusations I had made against Spider Mullins at my trial were proof of the spite and hatred that, for some reason, I had for the poor fellow, and that on the night of my release from prison I had come to his flat and wanted that spite and hatred on him by killing him.

That would be the story the prosecution would ask the jury to believe, and what single word could I say to refute it? None at all. If the body of Spider Mullins was found lying here and if it seemed known that he had visited his fat, I was as good as hanged already.

I looked round the room. There was not the slightest evidence of a struggle save for that ugly scum on the wall where the bottle of liquor had smashed against it, and the broken pieces of bottle lying on the floor.

While I had been sitting in Spider Mullins' chair waiting for him to come home, I had pulled off my gloves. Mechanically now, and prompted by the instinct of self-preservation, I pulled them on.

It was evident there was not a single fingerprint of mine in the place which could be traced. That was something to be deeply thankful for, because the moment murder was suspected the police would look for a motive, and although a rat like Spider Mullins must have plenty of enemies, the fact that I had that day been released from prison would not be overlooked.

But need murder be suspected? I asked myself. Wasn't it possible in all things so that the death of Spider Mullins might appear an accident? It was that dreadful hole in the back of his skull that was the snag. Even if he had tripped in a drunken moment and fallen backwards on to the fender, he could scarcely have come down with such force as to have driven the pointed brass knob so far into his skull.

I stood plunged in thought, staring at the body. It was curious how calm I now felt. The only thing that was causing me any present uneasiness was the approach of dawn, which couldn't be far off.

Then suddenly I knew what to do. It came to me like a flash, and I sat up in triumph. I was suddenly in a murder, and it was certainly not the police a pretty problem to solve.

First, however, I wanted some money. I didn't require it for the scheme I had in mind for the disposal of Spider Mullins' body. No; I required it for a different purpose altogether, and ever since I had learned, back under in Blackmore, that Spider Mullins had turned bookmaker, I had hoped and planned to possess myself of some of his money.

I knew from the conversation I'd heard while hiding under the bed that he had about one hundred and twenty pounds on him at this very moment. But his pals knew that as well, so I didn't intend touching it. No; I wanted that hundred and twenty pounds to be found on Spider Mullins when his body was discovered, because if the money were missing it would be an added pointer to foul play.

Consequently I embarked on a swift search of the room, secure in the knowledge that because of my gloves I was leaving no fingerprints. Almost at once I found what I was looking for, a heavy cash-box beneath a pile of old newspapers in a wardrobe. Taking a bunch of keys from the dead man's trouser pocket, I found the one which fitted the cash-box and opened the lid.

Inside the box was a thick wad of greasy one-pound notes and a small of five-pound notes. As I had anticipated, Spider Mullins wasn't the sort regularly to bank his winnings, if he banked any at all. Nor would he be afraid of theft, for with the gang Spider had chosen him it would take more courage than the average crook possessed to break in and steal his cash-box.

There was more than three hundred pounds all told in the cash-box, and I slipped two hundred of them into my pocket. Then, relocking the box, I carefully replaced it as I had found it and returned the dead man's keys to his pocket.

I then turned my attention to him. Lifting his head from the brass knob on which it was impaled, I took a piece of newspaper and carefully wiped all traces of blood and hair from the knob. There was a tiny trickle of blood down the inside of the fender, and this, too, I carefully removed.

There was no dirt on the grate, nor had there been all day, so I wrapped the blood-stained pieces of newspaper in a clean piece and thrust them into my pocket.

That done, I went through into the little kitchen and unlocked the rear door. Stepping out into the little yard, I spent a few moments, looking up at the windows of the adjoining houses and listening intently. It was the darkest hour of all the night, the hour before the dawn, and in only one window some distance away was there any glimmer of light.

Satisfied, I returned to the front-room, leaving the rear door of the kitchen ajar. Taking a half-pint bottle of whisky from the table, I filled a quantity of the raw spirit on the front of the dead man's shirt and jacket, so that he reeked of it. Then, replacing the stopper, I shoved the bottle into his jacket pocket. With one last look round the room, I stooped and lifted the body, slinging it across my shoulders in what is known as a fireman's lift.

(Continued on next page.)

'SINBAD'! HUGH CLEVELY!



Two names that spell thrills—and BOTH in the week's new release of DETECTIVE WEEKLY! 'SINBAD', master, story-teller, takes you to the red South Sea... brings to life lawless, perilous adventure as it has been lived... the amazing, true story of "RED SAUNDERS!" And HUGH CLEVELY—well, you've heard his sensational radio-serial, "The Gang Strangler," over the air. Here's a long and complete novel with excitement and mystery action of the same kind—"THE ADVENTURE OF THE RAJAHS' SEAL!" Unequalled reading entertainment for 2d! Get your DETECTIVE WEEKLY today!

DETECTIVE WEEKLY

Every Thursday 2d

Hardened and toughened though my muscles had become in the quarters of Blackmoor, I found the dead weight of the body taxed my strength to the uttermost, but I reckoned I could manage to carry it as far as the scheme I had in mind necessitated. Moving with my burden across the room, I knuckled the light switch up with my other hand, plunging the room into darkness. Then I carried the body slowly through the kitchen, across the yard, and out into the dark and narrow lane beyond.

With a glance to left and right in the darkness, I crossed the lane to the fence which separated it from the railway track. Bundling the body over, so that it fell heavily on the other side of the fence, I swung myself up and dropped down beside it.

A strip of coarse grass and weeds lay between me and the metals which stretched away, track on track, to the unlighted warehouse buildings opposite.

Making sure that the dead man's wallet and bottle of whisky were still in his pockets, I sat down by the shoulders and dragged him across the metals to the centre track.

I worked swiftly now, for at any moment a night goods or a through passenger express might come thundering down on me. Pulling the body against one of the metals, I arranged it as I had planned. Then, satisfied that no amount of track vibration caused by an oncoming train could dislodge the body from where it lay sprawled across the metals, I turned and sped crouching through the darkness towards the fence.

And there I waited, listening with straining ears. Away in the direction of the sidings I could hear the faint and distant clank of couplings, the hiss of steam and now and again the rattle of a signal were somewhere near me in the darkness.

A light engine purred, gliding smoothly along one of the farther tracks over by the warehouses. Then faintly, instantly, came the mounting hum of vibrating wheels, and I heard the rapid, distant beat of racing

wheels. Swiftly the noise grew in volume, and round the curve in the track they roared over the lurid engine-bank and long line of lighted coaches of the through express to London.

Then, with a rush and a roar, she was hurtling past to go thundering on her night journey, although I could not see them. I knew that in her wake lay the remnants of what but an hour before had been a living man. Turning away, I swung myself over the fence and was swallowed up in the darkness of the lane.

By leaving to Wimborough, fifteen miles from Barchester, and taking a ticket from there, I arrived in London shortly before midday. I was utterly weary with lack of sleep and the strain of the past twenty-four hours, so having been directed by a friendly porter to a decent dorm-house near King's Cross Station, I turned in and slept like a log until evening.

I slept in my trousers with my money in my pockets, for I wasn't going to run any risk of losing it, and I could not afford to be very hungry; so after a while I set off in search of the nearest eating-house.

On the way I bought an evening newspaper, and finding a likely looking eating-house, I ordered a steak and chips and opened my newspaper to read through it until my food was brought. Almost at once a paragraph headed with heavy type caught my eye. It read as follows:

"MYSTERIOUS RAILWAY FATALITY BOOKMAKER'S TRAGIC DEATH.

"Early this morning a playlayer found the mutilated body of a man lying on the railway track about half a mile south of Barchester Central Station.

"By means of papers found on the body the dead man has been identified as Edward Mullins, a bookmaker of Chartres Street, Barchester.

"How the deceased came to be on the line is at present a mystery, as no one has been seen crossing anywhere in the vicinity. The police are continuing their investigations."

I smiled to myself. The police were continuing their investigations, were they? Well let 'em. They'd have to be pretty smart to get at the truth of that particular job. Don't think I was callous, or proud of what I'd done. I was neither; but I'm not going to be such a hypocrite as to say that I felt either remorse or regret that Spider Mullins had been killed by me.

On leaving the eating-house after finishing my steak and chips, I got on a bus and went as far as Piccadilly Circus to see the sights. Lots of chaps I'd known in Barchester had been to London, mostly when Barchester Rovers were playing there, and they'd come back with glowing accounts of what they called the West End, saying what a fine sight it was at night with all the lights blazing.

And so it was. I'd never seen anything to beat it, and as I walked about, taking everything in, I thought about those poor fellows who in their dark and silent cells away yonder in Blackmoor, and I knew they'd give anything to be me, walking about amongst the hurrying, bustling throngs, a free man with plenty of money in my pockets. I had a glass of beer before I left the West End. I took a bus back to King's Cross and found another decent lodging-house, where I slept the night.

I have told you that when I was released from Blackmoor I was a man convinced that I had a certain sounding out on me, or, in behalf of my fellow pen. Having settled my account with Spider Mullins, I was now ready to perform that duty, so, after breakfast the next morning, I set off in search of a second-hand clothes shop, and, finding one, I bought myself a better suit of clothes than the one I was wearing.

I asked the clothes dealer how best I could get to Kingsborough Garden, Baywater. He directed me, and after getting on a wrong bus and missing it in the way several times in the maze of streets, I eventually arrived there. I found Kingsborough Garden to be an expensive-looking and exclusive residential thoroughfare. But I wasn't surprised at that, because Mr. Justice Granshaw lived in King-

borough Garden, so I'd expected it to be a pretty decent locality.

You may wonder how I came to know he lived there, but you wouldn't wonder if you realised how much money of the old lady in prison knew about the man who've sent them there. I wasn't only learned at Barchester where Mr. Justice Granshaw lived. I'd learned, also, the number of his house.

I walked slowly along the tree-lined pavement until I came to the house. It was an imposing-looking residence, but as I reached it my heart sank. For the blinds were down and the curtains were drawn across most of the windows, giving the house the appearance of being shut up. It was the Long Vacation, and the courts weren't sitting—that being another thing I'd learned in Blackmoor—and I looked as though Mr. Justice Granshaw was away from home, holidaying somewhere.

Stopping down, I pretended to busy myself trying my shoelace. As I did so I glanced down through the area railings into what looked like a large garden. It was there that I saw the garden drawn, and the room had the appearance of being occupied. I lingered as long as I dared, hoping to see some sign of movement in the room, then, straightening up, I walked slowly on. Several streets away I found a public path, and went in and had a glass of beer.

Over my drink I pondered what I should do. For a time I was baffled, then suddenly I had an inspiration. Gulping down the remainder of my beer, I quitted the pub, and went in search of stationer's shop. Finding one, I bought some pretty expensive newspaper with envelopes to match. My next job was to find some place where I could do a little writing. I thought a post-office would be about the best place, and, finding one, I went in and got busy.

Folding a blank sheet of newspaper, I placed it in one of the envelopes, which I sealed down. I don't write a bad hand—that being one of my few accomplishments—and taking a goodly quantity of paper I addressed the envelope to Mr. Justice Granshaw at his house in Kingsborough Garden. Satisfied that at a casual glance the writing would pass for that of a person of some education at least, I conveniently left the rest of the newspaper in the shop, where they were and hurried out of the post-office.

Returning to Kingsborough Garden, I waited casually along in the direction of Mr. Justice Granshaw's residence. As I reached it I slowed my pace even more and glanced severely down through the area railings. Tair time I did catch a glimpse of someone moving about in the basement kitchen, and by that I knew that all the servants weren't away.

Reaching the end of the street, I lingered there a few moments, then crossed casually to the opposite pavement and sauntered back the way I had come.

For almost two hours I maintained as unobtrusive a vigil as possible in Kingsborough Garden, keeping a wary eye cocked for any policeman or on-duty inspector who might be taking an interest in my movements, and at the end of that time my patience was rewarded.

A girl came up the area steps of Mr. Justice Granshaw's house and walked away along the street. I waited until she was well out of sight. I reckoned she must be one of the servants either going shopping or else taking her afternoon off. Quickening my pace, I adroitly headed her off, coming to a halt in front of her, my letter in my hand.

"Excuse me, miss," I said, raising my cap, "can you tell me where Mr. Justice Granshaw's house is?"

She looked at me in a friendly enough manner. She was a good-looking girl, I noticed.

"Yes, it's just along there," she said, and gave me the number of the house.

"But that can't be his place," I objected.

"I was going to ring there, but it looks as though it's shut up. I've got this letter for him," went on the girl, handing me a card.

"It's from a gentleman in Manchester who knows Mr. Granshaw and thinks he might be able to help me to get fixed up with a job in London. I come from Manchester, you know," I concluded.

She shook her head.

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SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS

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"I'm afraid Mr. Granshaw's not at home," she said. "I work there myself. It's funny you should have asked me about him. He's away on holiday just now."

"Oh, heck! Not, my luck!" I exclaimed with a great show of despondency. "I've come all the way from Manchester with this letter hoping I'd get fixed up with a job!" I stood irresolute a moment, fidgeting the letter in my hand, and I could see that she was feeling a bit sorry for me, anyway.

"I'll tell you what!" I said, pretending to brighten up. "I could post this letter on to him if I knew his address, or I could give the address to the gentleman in Manchester and he could write to him!"

I stared at her hopefully. She looked at me dubiously for a moment, then said: "Well, I don't know, but I don't see why you shouldn't have it. After all, you were sold to call on him. He's staying at Glenview, near Kilrie, in Larnmore. He's up there for the fishing," she added conversationally.

"Glenview's the name of the house, I suppose," I said, turning the address down with a stub of pencil.

"Yes, that's right," she said.

Thrusting envelope and pencil into my pocket, I turned to move on with her in the direction she'd been going. She didn't seem to mind, and together we walked to the end of the street. I'd have liked to have asked her to come to the pictures or something like that, but I didn't. It was too dangerous. I'd taken a big enough risk as it was talking to her like I had done. Considering what was in my mind concerning her employer, Mr. Justice Granshaw, the last time I spent in her company the better.

So, thanking her once again, I bade her good-day and made my way back to King's Cross. That night I caught a through express to Scotland—just before I left London I bought a stout leather belt, which I wore around my waist.

THE WRONG MEDICINE.

I HAVE said that amongst my few accomplishments was the ability to write a fairly long, snappy, I may mention here was my ability to drive a lorry, for in the old days before I was thrown on the dole, I'd been a good hand at driving the yard lorries of the Harbortest Engineering Works, where I was employed.

So, reaching Edinburgh, I spent more than half a day looking for a light, second-hand lorry for sale. I found one eventually, and after some haggling I got it at the sum of eighty pounds, cash down, and, without driving licence nor insurance policy, but that didn't worry me. I intended to drive carefully, and, given ordinary luck, I saw no reason why I should be stopped and asked to produce my license. Anyway, that was a risk I was forced to take, and after making a few necessary purchases, including a supply of food and a pair of old dungarees, I made a careful study of the road map, and left Edinburgh that same evening to drive to Kilrie.

The road was easy enough to get on at Dalwhinnie, where I branched off for Kilrie. It was almost dark when I passed through Dalwhinnie, for I'd driven carefully and slowly, so, pulling in at the side of what looked a lonely stretch of road, I snatched an hour's sleep.

I awoke stiff but refreshed and ate some bread and cheese, washing it down with a swig from the bottle of milk I'd brought with me. Then, sneezing my face with dirt and grease from the engine so that it looked as though I hadn't washed for days, I pulled my cap well down over my eyes and drove on.

As I neared Kilrie I saw an old farm labourer sort of chap coming plodding along the road toward me, a dog at his heels. Pulling up as I reached him, I leaned out of the driving-seat and said:

"D'you know where Glenview is?"

"Aye," he piped. "It's about two miles farther side of Kilrie. It's a big house standin' by itself. Go straight on through the village and ye canna miss it. It's on the left-hand side of the road gamin' north!"

I thanked him and drove on. There were few cars in the little village of Kilrie as I passed through, and a few minutes later I bend in the road brought into view a large.

(Continued on next page.)

THE GREAT ARMAMENTS RACE




10 More First Prizes of New Bikes!

4000 Other Grand Prizes

Still to be Won FREE

MORE Prize News for you! We're all set for the second month's lap in our Stupendous Stamp-Collecting Race. There are still Ten More "Hercules" Bikes and 4,000 other super Prizes to be won. They're FREE, too!

Every week in THRILLER, we are continuing to print Free Armaments Stamps—BATTLESHIPS, SEARCHLIGHTS, GUNS, and so on. There are now six different kinds to be collected. Just cut them out and stick to as many others as you can get hold of. And remember, all the stamps you collected last month (except Bombers and Submarines, which we called in) can be used for this month's contest as well.

This issue contains twenty stamps in all! Fifteen on this page, and Five more on Page 552, while if you also read other popular papers like "Detective Weekly" and "Sports Budget" you will find more of these stamps in them to help give you a big total.

At the end of June we shall again ask you how many of one or more kinds of stamps you've collected. If *which* stamps we shall ask for will be a close secret until then.

So go all out to get as many of these stamps as you can. Get your friends to do it, too—change stamps with them if you like and make the "race" more exciting for everybody.

At the end of another month, Five Bikes and up to 2,000 of the other prizes will be given away! The biggest collections of stamps called for will win—and readers will be asked to say which prizes they want, too!

No stamps to be sent in yet—we will tell you how and where when the time comes!

OVERSEAS READERS, TOO! You who are far away, you're in this great scheme, also, and special awards will be given for the best collections from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date for you as well, of course!

RULES—Five First Prizes of £4.5s. 6d. "Hercules" Cycles and up to 2,000 other prizes will be awarded in order of merit and *must* during the contest to the readers collecting and sending the largest collection of the stamps called for. Cash value of any of the first prizes may be divided in case of a tie or ties for such prizes. Use for any other prizes will be decided by the Editor.

All claims for prizes to be sent on the proper coupon (given at the end of each month); no allowances made for any changes or exchange forfeited or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No claims connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and binding throughout. (This offer also appears in "Detective Weekly," "Sports Budget," "Gems," "Modern Boy," "Tempter," "Clamphor," "Mugshot" and "Boy's Cinema.")



THE DRIFTER

(Continued from previous page.)

cropper-covered house of grey stone standing in its own grounds. This was Glenview, the present residence of Mr. Justice Granshaw. There could be no doubt about that in view of the directions I'd received from the old chap back yonder along the road.

Pulling in at the side of the road almost opposite the house, I crossed the gates of the drive, I swung myself down to the road and lifted the bonnet of the engine. Then, clambering back into the driving seat, I settled down to wait. I anticipated a long wait, but I didn't mind that. I'd waited five long and weary years for this, so I could easily wait a few hours longer, or a few days even, if it came to that.

Nor did I mind if anyone came along and was impatient enough to ask me what my lorry was doing parked there. I and my answer all ready. I would say we'd broken down and that my mate had gone off to try to find a telephone in order to arrange for a tow; and if it happened to be a policeman who questioned me, I'd say that my mate was the driver and that he had hit the fence and the motor car time sheets and all that sort of thing with him.

The trees of the grounds and the high, thick hedge which encircled them, effectively screened me from view of the house, so unless anyone happened to come down to the drive gates I wasn't likely to be spotted from that quarter.

Just exactly what Mr. Justice Granshaw's habits were up here I hadn't the faintest idea, of course. But the girl in Kingsborough Gardens had said he'd come here for the fishing, so the chances were that some time or other during the day he'd go off fishing somewhere. To reach wherever he intended fishing, he'd have to come out through the drive gates, and there I could be sure to be waiting from the grounds which he was in the habit of using. That didn't seem too likely to me, however, if he was going off fishing at any distance, and I was pinning my hopes on catching him coming through the drive gates.

At the moment, however, here I was, waiting outside the drive gates, for I hadn't lost sight of the fact that there was always a chance that it might be Mr. Justice Granshaw's custom to take a walk by himself somewhere—and, oh, how I hoped that such might be the case.

Shortly after nine o'clock an elderly postman came cycling leisurely along the road with the mail for Glenview. He dismounted beside me and said respectfully:

"Are... I said; "my mate's gone off to telephone for a tow."

"And fra' wheer will he be telephoning?" asked the postman with the curiosity of the man who minds everybody's business but his own.

"Oh, I dunno," I answered lazily. "From the first telephone he can find, I reckon."

"The nearest telephone's 't' the post office at Kilrie," said the postman. "He'll be safe."

"Aye, I expect so," I nodded.

He went off, pushing his bike up the drive. A few minutes later he reappeared, and with a friendly nod, went cycling away in the direction of Kingsborough.

A few moments later an old two-wheeler car turned out of the drive and went rattling away along the road ahead of me. It was driven by a pretty, fair-haired girl, and seated beside her, his fishing rods beside him, was Mr. Justice Granshaw.

I recognised him all right. You don't forget the face of a man who sentences you to five years penal servitude and twenty strokes of the cat, even if he forgets yours.

Seeing my car drive down the drive, I leapt for the driving-seat, pressed the self-starter, and set off in pursuit of the two-wheeler. We were travelling along high ground, and away below me, to the left, I could now see a wide and glittering stream. For a couple of miles

or more the stream meandered on our left, then the road dipped down towards it, and at the bottom of the hill the two-wheeler had pulled up. Mr. Justice Granshaw was alighting from it and the girl was handing him up his fishing tackle.

I drove past them without slackening speed, and breasting the opposite rise, vanished from view beyond the summit. Pulling up when I was satisfied I was out of their range of vision, I dropped down to the road and walked towards them on the inside of the stream.

From behind a clump of bushes by the side of the road I watched the girl turn the car, wave to Mr. Justice Granshaw, then drive back the way she had come.

Left to himself, Granshaw walked to the bank of the stream, some fifty yards from the road. Adjusting a small folding camp-stool, he sat down and commenced to fix the jointed pieces of his rod together. He was wearing waders, and having fixed his rod, he rose and waded out into the shallow waters of the stream. I watched him for another ten minutes, then, returning to the lorry, I turned it as quickly as possible and drove at a fast speed back down the hill.

Near the bottom of the hill I suddenly clattered on my wheels and came to a screeching, skidding stop. In the stillness of that lonely countryside, I was perfectly certain that Granshaw must have heard the shrink of my hastily applied brakes. Jumping down to the bank of the stream, on the inside of the fence which fringed it and set off running towards where Granshaw was standing, staring towards me from midstream.

"My heavens, air, come at once!" I shouted.

"To knock a girl down?"

"The fishings, as I thought it would. Wading hastily out of the stream, he came towards me at a laboured run. I halted as though waiting for him, and jerked my cap farther down over my eyes.

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six inches from the back. I carefully cut four long tails on the belt, knotting them at the end. Then, resuming the knits to my pocket, I turned to Mr. Justice Granshaw again, and for the first time I spoke.

"Mr. Justice Granshaw," I said quite calmly, "I've been waiting for you for six years. I've had the cat. You haven't. That's why you can't possibly know what the cat really does to a man. If you did know I don't think you'd ever again sentence a man to be lashed by the cat. Nor would your learned brethren on the Bench. I wish I had them all here as I've got you. I would teach them, as I intend to teach you, just what the cat means. You'd be able to tell your learned brethren that instead of lashing all hate and spite and viciousness out of a man, the cat lashes it in. You'll know the truth of that by your hatred for me by the time I'm finished with you. Are you listening?"

A violent quiver of his body seemed to indicate that he was listening.

"It's a poor doctor who won't try his own medicine," I went on, running the knotted tails of my stout leather belt through my fingers. "Patients have been killed before today by giving them the wrong medicine. And men's souls have been killed before today by giving them the wrong medicine—or should I say punishment? And the cat is the wrong medicine, Mr. Justice Granshaw, and to prove that to you, I'm going to give you a dose of my own medicine."

Feeling off my jacket, I took a fresh grip on my knotted-called whip and stepped forward.

"Well, come on," I said impatiently, as he lay there, face downwards with his hands up. "Have you anything to say, or haven't you?"

"I have only this to say to you," he responded in an uneasy, muffled voice. "I am up here in Scotland for my health. I have a weak back and you don't do me as you're threatening to do, it may kill me—"

"Oh, so you're trying to scare me, are you?" I cut in with a laugh. "No, no, you can't do that to me, Mr. Justice Granshaw. I'm not easily scared nowadays."

Stopping again, I replaced his gag, for although it was a very lovely countryside I didn't want him believing when I laid into him. Bound travels far in lonely country.

"I'll catch the stroke for you, the same as they do in prison," I said, stepping up and taking a fresh grip on my knotted belt. "Are you ready? Here goes! One!"

I brought the belt whistling down on his naked back. I didn't hit him too hard—yet as hard as I could have done if I'd put all my strength into it. But all the same he squirmed and writhed and made a choking, gasping noise behind his gag. Then, suddenly, he gasped and lay still and silent.

He neither gasped nor moaned, but just lay there limp and motionless. There was something about his immobility which suddenly startled me. With a swift movement I bent over him and turned him on his back.

With a strid cry I dropped on my knees beside him and pressed my hand against his heart. There was no beat there. He was quite dead, and as I rose slowly to my feet I knew that Mr. Justice Granshaw had not lied when he said he had a weak heart and might be killed by the lash.

(Don't miss the conclusion of this gripping story in next week's THRILLER Library.)

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